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THE

COLLECTED WORKS OF WILLIAM HAZLITT

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

VOLUME FOUR

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William Hazlitt.
From a miniature on ivory
Executed by John Hazlitt
about 1784.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF

WILLIAM HAZLITT

EDITED BY A. R. WALLER

AND ARNOLD GLOVER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

W. E. HENLEY

A Reply to Malthus

The Spirit of the Age

Etc.

1902

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A REPLY TO THE ESSAY ON POPULATION BY THE REV. T. R. MALTHUS

In a Series of Letters. To which are added, Extracts from the Essay, with Notes

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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ADVERTISEMENT

The three first of the following letters appeared originally in Cobbett's Weekly Political Register. There are several things, in which they may seem to require some apology. First, some persons, who were convinced by the arguments, have objected to the style as too flowery, and full of attempts at description. If I have erred in this respect, it has been from design. I have indeed endeavoured to make my book as amusing as the costiveness of my genius would permit. If however these critics persist in their objection, I will undertake to produce a work as dry and formal as they please, if they will undertake to find readers. Secondly, some of the observations may be thought too severe and personal. In the first place, I shall answer that the abuse, of which there is to be sure a plentiful sprinkling, is not I think unmerited or unsupported; and in the second place, that if I could have attacked the works successfully, without attacking the author, I should have preferred doing so. But the thing was impossible. Whoever troubles himself about abstract reasonings, or calm, dispassionate inquiries after truth? The public ought not to blame me for consulting their taste. As to the diffuseness, the repetitions, and want of method to be found in these letters, I have no good defence to make. I may however make the same excuse for the great length to which they have run, as the Frenchman did, who apologised for writing a long letter by saying, that he had not time to write a shorter.

LETTERS IN

ANSWER TO MALTHUS, &c.

LETTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Sir,—As the proposed alteration in the system of the Poor Laws must naturally engage your attention, as well as that of the public; and, as the authority of Mr. Malthus has often been referred to, and has great weight with many people on this subject, it may not be amiss to inquire, how far the reputation which that gentleman has gained, as a moral and political philosopher, can be safely reposed on as the foundation of any part of a system which is directed to objects of national utility, and requires close, comprehensive, and accurate reasoning. You, Sir, are not ignorant, that a name will do more towards softening down prejudices, and bolstering up a crude and tottering system, than any arguments whatever. It is always easier to quote an authority than to carry on a chain of reasoning. Mr. Malthus's reputation may, I fear, prove fatal to the poor of this country. His name hangs suspended over their heads, *in terrorem*, like some baleful meteor. It is the shield behind which the archers may take their stand, and gall them at their leisure. He has set them up as a defenceless mark, on which both friends and foes may exercise their malice, or their wantonness, as they think proper. He has fairly hunted them down, he has driven them into his toils, he has thrown his net over them, and they remain as a prey to the first invader, either to be sacrificed without mercy at the shrine of cold unfeeling avarice, or to linger out a miserable existence under the hands of ingenious and scientific tormentors.—There is a vulgar saying, 'Give a dog a bad name, and hang him.' The poor seem to me to be pretty much in this situation at present. The poor, Sir, labour under a natural stigma; they are *naturally* despised. Their interests are at best but coldly and remotely felt by the other classes

of society. Mr. Malthus's book has done all that was wanting to increase this indifference and apathy. But it is neither generous nor just, to come in aid of the narrow prejudices and hard-heartedness of mankind, with metaphysical distinctions and the cobwebs of philosophy. The balance inclines too much on that side already, without the addition of false weights. I confess I do feel some degree of disgust and indignation rising within me, when I see a man of Mr. Malthus's character and calling standing forward as the accuser of those 'who have none to help them,' as the high-priest of 'pride and covetousness,' forming selfishness into a regular code, with its codicils, institutes and glosses annexed, trying to muffle up the hand of charity in the fetters of the law, to suppress 'the compunctious visitings of nature,' to make men ashamed of compassion and good-nature as folly and weakness, 'laying the flattering unction' of religion to the conscience of the riotous and luxurious liver, and 'grinding the faces of the poor' with texts of scripture. Formerly the feelings of compassion, and the dictates of justice were found to operate as correctives on the habitual meanness and selfishness of our nature: at present this order is reversed; and it is discovered that justice and humanity are not obstacles in the way of, but that they are the most effectual strengtheners and supporters of our prevailing passions. Mr. Malthus has 'admirably reconciled the old quarrel between speculation and practice,' by shewing (I suppose in humble imitation of Mandeville) that our duty and our vices both lean the same way, and that the ends of public virtue and benevolence are best answered by the meanness, pride, extravagance, and insensibility of individuals. This is certainly a very convenient doctrine; and it is not to be wondered at, that it should have become so fashionable as it has.[1]

While the prejudice infused into the public mind by this gentleman's writings subsists in its full force, I am almost convinced that any serious attempt at bettering the condition of the poor will be ineffectual. The only object at present is to gain time. The less it is meddled with either with good or bad intentions, the better. Tampering with the disease 'will but skin and film the ulcerous part, while foul corruption, mining all within, infects unseen.' I have not confidence enough either in the integrity, the abilities, or the power of our state-doctors to be willing to trust it entirely in their hands. They risk nothing, if they fail. The patient is in too desperate a

[1] The late Sir W. Pulteney, whose character for liberality is well known, was firmly persuaded that the author of the Essay on Population was the greatest man that ever lived, and really wished to have bestowed some personal remuneration on Mr. M. as his political confessor, for having absolved him from all doubts and scruples in the exercise of his favourite virtue.

state to bring any imputation on their skill; and after all, it is only trying experiments *in corpore vili*. The only thing they need be afraid of is in reality doing *too much* good. This is the only error which would never be forgiven by those whose resentment they have most reason to dread. This however there will be no danger of. The state of public feeling, the dispositions of individuals, the narrow jealousy of parties, and the interests of the most powerful members of the community will, I suspect, suffer little effectually to be done for bettering the condition, exalting the character, enlightening the understandings, or securing the comforts, the independence, the virtue and happiness of the lower classes of the people. But, I am not equally sure that the means employed for this very purpose may not be made a handle for stifling every principle of liberty and honour in the hearts of a free people. It will be no difficult matter, as things are circumstanced, under pretence of propriety and economy, to smuggle in the worst of tyrannies, a principle of unrelenting, incessant, vexatious, over-ruling influence, extending to each individual, and to all the petty concerns of life.

This is what strikes me on the first view of the subject. I would ask, Is Mr. Whitbread sure of the instruments he is to employ in the execution of his scheme? Is he sure that his managing partners in this new political firm of opulent patronage will not play the game into the hands of those whose views of government and civilization are very different from his own? But it seems, that whether practicable, or no, Mr. Whitbread must bring in a Poor Bill. The effect of it appears to me to be putting the poor into the wardship of the rich, to be doing away the little remains of independence we have left, and making them once more what they were formerly, the vassals of a wealthy aristocracy. For my own part, who do not pretend to see far into things, and do not expect miracles from human nature, I should wish to trust as little as possible to the liberality and enlightened views of country squires, or to the *tender mercies* of justices of the peace.

The example of Scotland is held out to us as a proof of the beneficial effects of popular education, and we are promised all the same advantages from the adoption of the same plan. The education of the poor is the grand specific which is to cure all our disorders, and make the leper whole again; and, like other specifics, it is to operate equally on all constitutions and in all cases. But I may ask, Is the education of the poor the only circumstance in which Scotland differs from England? Are there no other circumstances in the situation of this country that may render such a scheme impracticable, or counteract its good effects, or render it even worse than nugatory?

Is knowledge in itself a principle of such universal and indisputable excellence that it can never be misapplied, that it can never be made the instrument and incentive to mischief, or that it can never be mixed and contaminated with 'baser matter'? Do not the peculiar principles and discipline of the church of Scotland, does not the traditional and habitual faith in the doctrines of religion, do not the general manners not of the poor only, but of the other classes of society, does not the state of cultivation, do not the employments of the people, the absence of luxury, and temptation, the small number of great towns, and the remains of ancient customs, tend to strengthen, to forward, to give consistency to, and secure the good effects of education? Or will Mr. Whitbread say that he can supply the place of these with a beadle, a white wand, a spelling book, and a primmer? Supposing it practicable, will the adoption of a general plan of education have the same effect in our great manufacturing towns, in our sea-ports, in the metropolis, that it has in the heart of Scotland, or in the mountains of Cumberland? Will it not have the contrary effect?

It is not reading in the abstract, but the kind of reading they are likely to meet with, and the examples about them leading them to emulate the patterns of sobriety and industry, or of vice and profligacy held out to them in books, that will do either good or harm to the morals of a people. In the country the people read moral or religious, or, at least, innocent books, and therefore, they are benefited by them; in towns, they as often meet with licentious and idle publications, which must do them harm. It is in vain to say that you will give them *good* books, they will get *bad ones*. Will those hot-beds of vice, the factories of Manchester, &c., be less fruitful for having the *farina* of knowledge sprinkled over them? Will not corruption quicken faster, and spread wider for having this new channel opened to it? Will a smattering in books, and the current pamphlets of the day tend to quench and smother the flame of the passions, or will it add fuel to them? I do not scruple to assert, that religion itself, when it comes in contact with certain situations, may be highly dangerous. It is the soil in which the greatest virtues and the greatest vices take root. Where it has not strength to stop the torrent of dissolute manners, it gives it additional force by checking it; as the bow that has been bent the contrary way, recoils back with tenfold violence. It is for this reason that the morals of the people in the trading towns in the north of England are, I believe, worse than they are farther south, because they are brought up more religiously. The common people there are almost all of them originally dissenters. Again, it may be asked, will the poor people in the

trading towns send their children to school instead of sending them to work at a factory? Or will their employers, forgetting their own interests, compel them to do it? Or will they give up their profits and their wealth for the sake of informing the minds, and preserving the morals of the poor? Oh! no. It may be replied, that it is chiefly for the peasantry and country people, who compose the largest part of the community, that this plan of education is intended. But they are the very people who do not stand in need of it, and to whom, if it does no harm, it will do little good. If working hard, and living sparingly are the chief lessons meant to be inculcated in their minds, they are already tolerably perfect in their parts. As for the rest, it is in vain to attempt to make men any thing else but what their situation makes them. We are the creatures not of knowledge, but of circumstances.

For all these reasons I cannot help looking at this general parallel between the benefits derived from education in Scotland, and those expected from it in this country as little better than a *leurre de dupe*. The advantages of education in the abstract are, I fear, like other abstractions, not to be found in nature. I thought that the rage for blind reform, for abstract utility, and general reasoning, had been exploded long since. If ever it was proper, it was proper on general subjects, on the nature of man and his prospects in general. But the spirit of abstraction driven out of the minds of philosophers has passed into the heads of members of parliament: banished from the closets of the studious, it has taken up its favourite abode in the House of Commons. It has only shifted its ground and its objects according to the character of those in whom it is found. It has dwindled down into petty projects, speculative details, and dreams of practical, positive matter-of-fact improvement. These new candidates for fame come in awkwardly holding up the train of philosophy; and, like the squires of political romance, invite you to sit down with them to the spoonfuls of whipt syllabub, the broken scraps of logic, and the same banquet of windy promises which had been so much more handsomely served up, and to satiety, by their masters.

I know nothing of Mr. Whitbread personally. His character stands fair with the public, for consistency and good intention. But I cannot recognise in his plodding, mechanical, but ill-directed and unsuccessful endeavours to bring to justice a great public delinquent, in his flowery common-place harangues, or in the cold, philosophic indifference of the sentiments he has expressed upon the present occasion, either the genius, penetration, or generous enthusiasm, (regulated, not damped by the dictates of reason) which shall be equally proof against the artifices of designing men, against the

sanguine delusions of personal vanity, or the difficulties, the delays, the disgust, and probable odium to be encountered in the determined prosecution of such a task. The celebrated Howard fell a martyr to the great cause of humanity in which he embarked. He plunged into the depth of dungeons, into the loathsome cells of disease, ignominy, and despair; he sacrificed health and life itself as a pledge of the sincerity of his motives. But what proof has Mr. Whitbread ever given of his true and undissembled attachment to the same cause? What sacrifices has he made, what fatigues has he suffered, what pain has he felt, what privation has he undergone in the pursuit of his object, that he should be depended on as the friend and guardian of the poor, as the dispenser of good or ill to millions of his fellow-beings? The 'champion' should be the 'child' of poverty. The author of our religion, when he came to save the world, took our nature upon him, and became as one of us: it is not likely that any one should ever prove the *saviour* of the poor, who has not common feelings with them, and who does not know their weaknesses and wants. To the officious inquiries of all others, What then are we to do for them? The best answer would perhaps be, Let them alone.—

I return to the subject from which I set out, and from which I have wandered without intending it; I mean the system of Mr. Malthus, under the auspices of whose discoveries it seems the present plan is undertaken, though it differs in many of its features from the expedients recommended by that author. I am afraid that the parent discovery may, however, in spite of any efforts to prevent it, overlay the ricketty offspring. Besides, the original design and principle gives a bias to all our subsequent proceedings, and warps our views without our perceiving it. Mr. Malthus's system must, I am sure, ever remain a stumbling block in the way of true political economy, as innate ideas for a long time confused and perplexed all attempts at philosophy. It is an *ignis fatuus*, which can only beguile the thoughtless gazer, and lead him into bogs and quicksands, before he knows where he is. The details of his system are, I believe, as confused, contradictory, and uncertain, as the system itself. I shall, however, confine my remarks to the outlines of his plan, and his general principles of reasoning. In these respects, I have no hesitation in saying that his work is the most complete specimen of *illogical*, crude and contradictory reasoning, that perhaps was ever offered to the notice of the public. A clear and comprehensive mind is, I conceive, shewn, not in the extensiveness of the plan which an author has chalked out for himself, but in the order and connection observed in the arrangement of the subject, and the consistency of the several

parts. This praise is so far from being applicable to the reasoning of our author, that nothing was ever more loose and incoherent. 'The latter end of his commonwealth always forgets the beginning.' Argument threatens argument, conclusion stands opposed to conclusion. This page is an answer to the following one, and that to the next. There is hardly a single statement in the whole work, in which he seems to have had a distinct idea of his own meaning. The principle itself is neither new, nor does it prove any thing new; least of all does it prove what he meant it to prove. His whole theory is a continued contradiction; it is a nullity in the science of political philosophy.

I must, however, defer the proof of these assertions to another letter, when, if you should deem what I have already said worthy the notice of your readers, I hope to make them out to their and your satisfaction.

LETTER II

ON THE ORIGINALITY OF MR. MALTHUS'S PRINCIPAL ARGUMENT

Sir,—The English have been called a nation of philosophers; as I conceive, on very slender foundations. They are indeed somewhat slow and dull, and would be wise, if they could. They are fond of deep questions without understanding them; and have that perplexed and plodding kind of intellect, which takes delight in difficulties, and contradictions, without ever coming to a conclusion. They feel most interest in things which promise to be the least interesting. What is confused and unintelligible they take to be profound; whatever is remote and uncertain, they conceive must be of vast weight and importance. They are always in want of some new and mighty project in science, in politics, or in morality for the morbid sensibility of their minds to brood over and exercise itself upon: and by the time they are tired of puzzling themselves to no purpose about one absurdity, another is generally ready to start up, and take its place. Thus there is a perpetual restless succession of philosophers and systems of philosophy: and the proof they give you of their wisdom to-day, is by convincing you what fools they were six months before. Their pretensions to solidity of understanding rest on the foundation of their own shallowness and levity; and their gravest demonstrations rise out of the ruins of others.

Mr. Malthus has for some time past been lord of the ascendant.

But I will venture to predict that his reign will not be of long duration. His hour is almost come; and this mighty luminary, 'who so lately scorched us in the meridian, will sink temperately to the west, and be hardly felt as he descends.' It is not difficult to account for the very favourable reception his work has met with in certain classes of society: it must be a source of continual satisfaction to their minds by relieving them from the troublesome feelings so frequently occasioned by the remains of certain silly prejudices, and by enabling them to set so completely at defiance the claims of 'worthless importunity in rags.' But it is not easy to account for the attention which our author's reasonings have excited among thinking men, except from a habit of extreme abstraction and over-refined speculation, unsupported by actual observation or a general knowledge of practical subjects, in consequence of which the mind is dazzled and confounded by any striking fact which thwarts its previous conclusions. There is also in some minds a low and narrow jealousy, which makes them glad of any opportunity to escape from the contemplation of magnificent scenes of visionary excellence, to hug themselves in their own indifference and apathy, and to return once more to their natural level. Mr. Malthus's essay was in this respect a nice *let-down* from the too sanguine expectations and overstrained enthusiasm which preceded it. Else, how a work of so base tendency, and so poorly glossed over, which strikes at the root of every humane principle, and all the while cants about sensibility and morality, in which the little, low, rankling malice of a parish-beadle, or the overseer of a workhouse is disguised in the garb of philosophy, and recommended as a dress for every English gentleman to wear, in which false logic is buried under a heap of garbled calculations, such as a bad player might make at cribbage to puzzle those with, who knew less of the game than himself, where every argument is a *felo de se*, and defeats its own purpose, containing both 'its bane and antidote' within itself, how otherwise such a miserable reptile performance should ever have crawled to that height of reputation which it has reached, I am utterly unable to comprehend. But it seems Mr. Malthus's essay was a *discovery*. There are those whom I have heard place him by the side of Sir Isaac Newton, as both equally great, the one in natural, the other in political philosophy. But waving this comparison, I must confess, that were I really persuaded that Mr. Malthus had made any discovery at all, there is so little originality, and so much ill-nature and illiberality in the world, that I should be tempted to overlook the large share of the latter which Mr. Malthus possesses in common with the rest of mankind (and which in him may probably be owing to ill-digestion, to a sickly

constitution, or some former distaste conceived against poverty) and to consider him merely in the light of a man of genius. *Multum abludit imago.* Indeed I do not much see what there is to discover on the subject, after reading the genealogical table of Noah's descendants, and knowing that the world is round. But even allowing that there was something in the nature of the subject which threw over it a veil of almost impenetrable obscurity, Mr. Malthus was not the first who found out the secret. Whatever some of his ignorant admirers may pretend, Mr. Malthus will not say that this was the case. He has himself given us a list of authors, some of whom he had read before, and some since the first publication of his Essay,[1] who fully understood and clearly stated this principle. Among these Wallace is the chief. He has not only stated the general principle with the utmost force and precision, by pointing out the necessary disproportion between the tendency in population and the tendency in the means of subsistence to increase after a certain period, (and till this period, namely till the world became *full*, I must contend in opposition to Mr. Malthus that the disproportion would not be *necessary*, but artificial); but what is most remarkable, he has brought this very argument forward as an answer to the same schemes of imaginary improvement, which the author of the Essay on population first employed it to overturn.[2] For it is to be remembered that the use which our author has since made of this principle to shut up the workhouse, to *snub* the poor, to stint them in their wages, to deny them any relief from the parish, and preach lectures to them on the new-invented crime of matrimony, was an after-thought. His first, his grand, his most memorable effort was directed against the modern philosophy. It was the service his borrowed weapons did in that cause, that sanctified them at all other purposes. I shall have occasion by and by to examine how far the argument was a solid one; at present I am only inquiring into the originality of the idea. And here I might content myself with referring your readers to Wallace's work; or it might be sufficient to inform them that after indulging in the former part of it in all the schemes of fancied excellence and Utopian government, which Sir Thomas More and so many other philosophers and speculators have endeavoured to establish,

[1] Among the former are Hume, Wallace, Smith, and Price; among the latter are the Economists, Montesquieu, Franklin, Sir James Steuart, Arthur Young, Mr. Townshend, Plato, and Aristotle.

[2] I beg leave to refer the reader to some letters which appeared on this subject, in the Monthly Magazine, written by a well informed and ingenious man, who had too much good sense and firmness to be carried away by the tide of vulgar prejudice.

he then enters into an elaborate refutation of them, by describing the evils, 'the universal confusion and perplexity in which all such perfect forms of society must soon terminate, the sooner on account of their perfection,' from the principle of population, and as he expresses it, 'from these primary determinations in nature, a limited earth, a limited degree of fertility, and the continual increase of mankind.' However, as it is probable that most of your readers may not have the book within their reach, and as people do not like to take these things upon trust, or from a mere general representation of them, I must beg your insertion of the following extract from the work itself; and though it is pretty long, yet as you, Sir, seem to be of opinion with me that the subject of Mr. Malthus's reputation is a matter of no mean interest to the public, I am in hopes that you will not think your pages misemployed in dissipating the illusion. As to Mr. Malthus himself, if he is a vain man, he ought to be satisfied with this acknowledgement of his importance.

'But without entering further into these abstracted and uncertain speculations, it deserves our particular attention, that as no government which hath hitherto been established, is free from all seeds of corruption, or can be expected to be eternal; so if we suppose a government to be perfect in its original frame, and to be administered in the most perfect manner, after whatever model we suppose it to have been framed, such a perfect form would be so far from lasting for ever, that it must come to an end so much the sooner on account of its perfection. For, though happily such governments should be firmly established, though they should be found consistent with the reigning passions of human nature, though they should spread far and wide; nay, though they should prevail universally, they must at last involve mankind in the deepest perplexity, and in universal confusion. For how excellent soever they may be in their own nature, they are altogether inconsistent with the present frame of nature, and with a limited extent of earth.

'Under a perfect government, the inconveniences of having a family would be so intirely removed, children would be so well taken care of, and everything become so favourable to populousness, that though some sickly seasons or dreadful plagues in particular climates might cut off multitudes, yet in general, mankind would encrease so prodigiously, that the earth would at last be over-stocked, and become unable to support its numerous inhabitants.

'How long the earth, with the best culture of which it is capable from human genius and industry, might be able to nourish its perpetually encreasing inhabitants, is as impossible as it is unnecessary to be determined. It is not probable that it could have supported

them during so long a period as since the creation of Adam. But whatever may be supposed of the length of this period, of necessity it must be granted, that the earth could not nourish them for ever, unless either its fertility could be continually augmented, or by some secret in nature, like what certain enthusiasts have expected from the philosopher's stone, some wise adept in the occult sciences, should invent a method of supporting mankind quite different from any thing known at present. Nay, though some extraordinary method of supporting them might possibly be found out, yet if there was no bound to the increase of mankind, which would be the case under a perfect government, there would not even be sufficient room for containing their bodies upon the surface of the earth, or upon any limited surface whatsoever. It would be necessary, therefore, in order to find room for such multitudes of men, that the earth should be continually enlarging in bulk, as an animal or vegetable body.

'Now since philosophers may as soon attempt to make mankind immortal, as to support the animal frame without food; it is equally certain, that limits are set to the fertility of the earth, and that its bulk, so far as is hitherto known, hath continued always the same, and probably could not be much altered without making considerable changes in the solar system. It would be impossible, therefore, to support the great numbers of men who would be raised up under a perfect government; the earth would be overstocked at last, and the greatest admirers of such fanciful schemes must foresee the fatal period when they would come to an end, as they are altogether inconsistent with the limits of that earth in which they must exist.

'What a miserable catastrophe of the most generous of all human systems of government! How dreadfully would the magistrates of such commonwealths find themselves disconcerted at that fatal period, when there was no longer any room for new colonies, and when the earth could produce no further supplies! During all the preceding ages, while there was room for increase, mankind must have been happy; the earth must have been a paradise in the literal sense, as the greatest part of it must have been turned into delightful and fruitful gardens. But when the dreadful time should at last come, when our globe, by the most diligent culture, could not produce what was sufficient to nourish its numerous inhabitants, what happy expedient could then be found out to remedy so great an evil?

'In such a cruel necessity, must there be a law to restrain marriage? Must multitudes of women be shut up in cloisters like the ancient vestals or modern nuns? To keep a ballance between the two sexes, must a proportionable number of men be debarred from marriage? Shall the Utopians, following the wicked policy of superstition, forbid

their priests to marry; or shall they rather sacrifice men of some other profession for the good of the state? Or, shall they appoint the sons of certain families to be maimed at their birth, and give a sanction to the unnatural institution of eunuchs? If none of these expedients can be thought proper, shall they appoint a certain number of infants to be exposed to death as soon as they are born, determining the proportion according to the exigencies of the state; and pointing out the particular victims by lot, or according to some established rule? Or, must they shorten the period of human life by a law, and condemn all to die after they had compleated a certain age, which might be shorter or longer, as provisions were either more scanty or plentiful? Or what other method should they devise (for an expedient would be absolutely necessary) to restrain the number of citizens within reasonable bounds?

'Alas! how unnatural and inhuman must every such expedient be accounted! The natural passions and appetites of mankind are planted in our frame, to answer the best ends for the happiness both of the individuals and of the species. Shall we be obliged to contradict such a wise order? Shall we be laid under the necessity of acting barbarously and inhumanly? Sad and fatal necessity! And which, after all, could never answer the end, but would give rise to violence and war. For mankind would never agree about such regulations. Force, and arms, must at last decide their quarrels, and the deaths of such as fall in battle, leave sufficient provisions for the survivors, and make room for others to be born.

'Thus the tranquillity and numerous blessings of the Utopian governments would come to an end; war, or cruel and unnatural customs, be introduced, and a stop put to the increase of mankind, to the advancement of knowledge, and to the culture of the earth, in spite of the most excellent laws and wisest precautions. The more excellent the laws had been, and the more strictly they had been observed, mankind must have sooner become miserable. The remembrance of former times, the greatness of their wisdom and virtue, would conspire to heighten their distress;[1] and the world, instead of remaining the mansion of wisdom and happiness, become the scene of vice and confusion. Force and fraud must prevail, and mankind be reduced to the same calamitous condition as at present.

'Such a melancholy situation in consequence merely of the want of provisions, is in truth more unnatural than all their present calamities. Supposing men to have abused their liberty, by which

[1] Yet it is extraordinary that with all their wisdom and virtue they would not be able to take any steps to prevent this distress. This is a species of fascination, of which it is difficult to form any conception.

abuse, vice has once been introduced into the world; and that wrong notions, a bad taste, and vicious habits, have been strengthened by the defects of education and government, our present distresses may be easily explained. They may even be called natural, being the natural consequences of our depravity. They may be supposed to be the means by which providence punishes vice; and by setting bounds to the increase of mankind, prevents the earth's being overstocked, and men being laid under the cruel necessity of killing one another. But to suppose that in the course of a favourable providence, a perfect government had been established, under which the disorders of human passions had been powerfully corrected and restrained; poverty, idleness, and war banished; the earth made a paradise; universal friendship and concord established, and human society rendered flourishing in all respects; and that such a lovely constitution should be overturned, not by the vices of men, or their abuse of liberty, but by the order of nature itself, seems wholly unnatural, and altogether disagreeable to the methods of providence.

'By reasoning in this manner, it is not pretended that 'tis unnatural to set bounds to human knowledge and happiness, or to the grandeur of society, and to confine what is finite to proper limits. It is certainly fit to set just bounds to every thing according to its nature, and to adjust all things in due proportion to one another. Undoubtedly, such an excellent order, is actually established throughout all the works of God, in his wide dominions. But there are certain primary determinations in nature, to which all other things of a subordinate kind must be adjusted. A limited earth, a limited degree of fertility and the continual increase of mankind are three of these original constitutions. To these determinations, human affairs, and the circumstances of all other animals, must be adapted. In which view, it is unsuitable to our ideas of order, that while the earth is only capable of maintaining a determined number, the human race should increase without end. This would be the necessary consequence of a perfect government and education. On which account it is more contrary to just proportion, to suppose that such a perfect government should be established in such circumstances, than that by permitting vice, or the abuse of liberty in the wisdom of providence, mankind should never be able to multiply so as to be able to overstock the earth.

'From this view of the circumstances of the world, notwithstanding the high opinion we have of the merits of Sir Thomas More, and other admired projectors of perfect governments in ancient or modern times, we may discern how little can be expected from their most perfect systems.

'As for these worthy philosophers, patriots, and law-givers, who have employed their talents in framing such excellent models, we ought to do justice to their characters, and gratefully to acknowledge their generous efforts to rescue the world out of that distress into which it has fallen, through the imperfection of government. Sincere, and ardent in their love of virtue, enamoured of its lovely form, deeply interested for the happiness of mankind, to the best of their skill, and with hearts full of zeal, they have strenuously endeavoured to advance human society to perfection. For this, their memory ought to be sacred to posterity. But if they expected their beautiful systems actually to take place, their hopes were ill founded, and they were not sufficiently aware of the consequences.

'The speculations of such ingenious authors enlarge our views, and amuse our fancies. They are useful for directing us to correct certain errors at particular times. Able legislators ought to consider them as models, and honest patriots ought never to lose sight of them, or any proper opportunity of transplanting the wisest of their maxims into their own governments, as far as they are adapted to their particular circumstances, and will give no occasion to dangerous convulsions. But this is all that can be expected. Though such ingenious romances should chance to be read and admired, jealous and selfish politicians need not be alarmed. Such statesmen need not fear that ever such airy systems shall be able to destroy their craft, or disappoint them of their intention to sacrifice the interests of mankind to their own avarice or ambition. There is too powerful a charm which works secretly in favor of such politicians, which will for ever defeat all attempts to establish a perfect government. There is no need of miracles for this purpose. The vices of mankind are sufficient. And we need not doubt but providence will make use of them, for preventing the establishment of governments which are by no means suitable to the present circumstances of the earth.' See Various Prospects of mankind, nature and providence. Chap. iv. p. 113.

Here then we have not only the same argument stated; but stated in the same connection and brought to bear on the very same subject to which it is applied by the author of the Essay. The principle and the consequences deduced from it are exactly the same. It often happens that one man is the first to make a particular discovery or observation, and that another draws from it an important inference of which the former was not at all aware. But this is not the case in the present instance. As far as general reasoning will go, it is impossible that any thing should be stated more clearly, more fully and explicitly than Wallace has here stated the argument against the progressive

amelioration of human affairs, from the sole principle of population. 'So will his anticipation prevent Mr. Malthus's discovery;' for it happens that Wallace's book was published so long ago as the year 1761. As to the details of the Essay, I shall leave them to the *connoisseurs*, not pretending to know much about the matter; but as to the general principle or ground-work, I must contend that it was completely pre-occupied: Mr. Malthus has no more pretentions to originality on that score, than I or any one else would have, who after having read Mr. Malthus's work undertook to retail the arguments contained in it and did it in words a little different from his own.—'Oh! but,' I hear some one exclaim, 'the geometrical and arithmetical series! Has Wallace said any thing of them? did he find them out, or was not this discovery reserved entirely for the genius and penetration of Mr. Malthus?' Why really I do not know: whether after having brought his principle to light, he christened it himself, is more than I can pretend to determine. It seems to me sufficient for Wallace to have said that let the one ratio increase as fast as it would, the other would increase much faster, as this is all that is practically meant by a geometrical and arithmetical series. I should have no objection to let Mr. Malthus have the honour of standing godfather to another's bantling (and Mr. Shandy was of opinion that it was a matter of as great importance to hit upon a lucky name for a child as to beget it) but that the technical phrase he has employed as a convenient shorthand method of explaining the subject, in reality applies only to one half of it. The gradual increase applies only to the degree of cultivation of the earth, not to the quantity. These two things are palpably distinct. It does not begin to take place till the whole surface of the earth has been cultivated to a certain degree, or only with respect to those parts of it which have been cultivated. It is evident that while most of the soil remained wholly unoccupied and uncultivated, (which must have been the case for many ages after these two principles began to operate, and is still the case in many countries) the power of increase in the productions of the earth, and consequently, in the support of population would be exactly in proportion to the population itself, for there would be nothing more necessary in order to the earth's maintaining its inhabitants than that there should be inhabitants enough to till it. In this case the cultivation of the earth would be limited by the population, not the population by the state of the cultivation. Where there was no want of room, and a power of transporting themselves from place to place, which there would naturally be in great continents, and in gradually increasing colonies, there could be no want of subsistence. All that would be wanted would be power

to raise or gather the fruits which the earth had in store, which as long as men were born with hands they would be always able to do. If a certain extent of ground easily maintained a certain number of inhabitants, they would only have to spread themselves over double the surface to maintain double the number. The difficulty is not in making more land maintain more men, but in making the same spot of ground maintain a greater number than it did before. Thus Noah might have taken possession of the three contiguous quarters of the globe for himself and his three sons; and, if instead of having three sons, he had had three hundred, there would, I believe, have been no danger of their starving, but the contrary, from the rapid increase of population. What I mean to shew is, that it is not true as a general principle that the increase of population and the increase of subsistence are necessarily disproportionate to each other, that the one is in a geometrical, the other is in an arithmetical ratio; but, that in a particular and very important view of the subject, the extent of population is only limited by the extent of the earth, and that the increase of the means of subsistence will be in proportion to the greater extent of surface occupied, which may be enlarged as fast as there are numbers to occupy it. I have been thus particular, because mathematical terms carry with them an imposing air of accuracy and profundity, and ought, therefore, to be applied strictly, and with the greatest caution, or not at all. I should say, then, that looking at the subject in a general and philosophical point of view, I do not think that the expression of an arithmetical and geometrical series applies: for, with respect to the extent of ground occupied, which is one thing on which population depends, and in the first instance always, this might evidently be increased in any ratio whatever, that the increase of population would admit, until the earth was entirely occupied; and after that there would be no room either for a geometrical or arithmetical progression; it would be at an absolute stand. The distinction is therefore confined to the degree of art and diligence used in the cultivation of those parts which have been already occupied. This has no doubt gone on at a very slow kind of snail's pace from the very first, and will I dare say continue to do so. Or to adopt Wallace's distinction, the increase of population is either not restricted at all by the 'limited nature of the earth,' or it is limited absolutely by it: it is only kept back indefinitely by the 'limited fertility' of the earth; and it cannot be said to be kept back necessarily by this, while there are vast tracts of habitable land left untouched. Till there is no more room, and no more food to be procured without extreme exertion and contrivance, the arithmetical and geometrical ratios do not naturally

begin to operate; and the gradual increase that might take place after that period, is not in my opinion (who am no great speculator) of sufficient importance to deserve a pompous appellation. I would, therefore, rather stop there, because it will simplify the question. Till the world is full, or at least till every country is full, that is, maintains as many inhabitants as the soil will admit, namely, till it can be proved satisfactorily that it might not by taking proper methods be made to maintain double the number that it does, the increase of mankind is not necessarily checked by the 'limited extent of the earth,' nor by its 'limited fertility,' but by other causes. Till then population must be said to be kept down, not by the original constitution of nature, but by the will of man. Till then, Mr. Malthus has no right to set up his arithmetical and geometrical ratios upon the face of the earth, and say they are the work of nature. You, Sir, will not be at a loss to perceive the fallacy which lurks under the gloss which Mr. Malthus has here added to Wallace's text. His readers looking at his mathematical scale will be apt to suppose, that population is a naturally growing and necessary evil; that it is always encroaching on and straitening the means of existence, and doing more harm than good: that its pernicious effects are at all times and in all places equally necessary and unavoidable; that it is at all times an evil, but that the evil increases in proportion to the increase of population; and that, therefore, there is nothing so necessary as to keep population down at all events. This is the imperious dictate of nature, the grinding law of necessity, the end and the fulfilling of the commandment. I do not mean to say, that Mr. Malthus does not often shift his ground on this subject, or that he is not himself aware of the deception. It is sufficient for him that he has it to resort to, whenever he is in want of it, that he has been able to throw dust in his readers' eyes, and dazzle them by a specious shew of accuracy; that he has made out a bill of indictment against the principle of population as a common nuisance in society, and has obtained a general warrant against it, and may have it brought into court as a felon whenever he thinks proper. He has alarmed men's minds with confused apprehensions on the subject, by setting before their eyes, in an orderly series, the malignant nature and terrible effects of population, which are perpetually increasing as it goes on: and they are ready to assent to every scheme that promises to keep these dreadful evils at a distance from them. '*Sacro tremuere timore.* Every coward is planet-struck.' But nothing of all this is the truth. Population is only an evil, as Mr. Malthus has himself shewn, in proportion as it is excessive; it is not a necessary evil, till the supply of food can, from natural

causes, no longer keep pace with it: till this is the case, no restraints are necessary, and when this is the case, the same wholesome degree of restraint, the same quantity of vice and misery, will operate equally to prevent any tremendous consequences, whether the actual population is great or small; that is, whether it is stopped only from having reached the utmost limits prescribed by nature, or whether it has been starved and crushed down long before that period by positive, arbitrary institutions, and the perverse nature of man. But this is entering upon a matter which I intended to reserve for another letter in which I shall examine the force of the arguments which Mr. Malthus has built upon this principle. At present, I have done all that was necessary to the performance of the first part of my engagement, which was to shew that Mr. Malthus had little claim to the praise of originality.

LETTER III

ON THE PRINCIPLE OF POPULATION AS AFFECTING THE SCHEMES OF UTOPIAN IMPROVEMENT

'A swaggering paradox, when once explained, soon sinks into an unmeaning common-place.'

BURKE.

Sir,—This excellent saying of a great man was never more strictly applicable to any system than it is to Mr. Malthus's paradox, and his explanation of it. It seemed, on the first publication of the Essay on Population, as if the whole world was going to be turned topsy-turvy, all our ideas of moral good, and evil were in a manner confounded, we scarcely knew whether we stood on our head or our heels: but after exciting considerable expectation, giving us a good shake, and making us a little dizzy, Mr. Malthus, does as we do when we shew the children *London*,—sets us on our feet again, and every thing goes on as before. The common notions that prevailed on this subject, till our author's first population-scheme tended to weaken them, were that life is a blessing, and that the more people could be maintained in any state in a tolerable degree of health, comfort and decency, the better: that want and misery are not desirable in themselves, that famine is not to be courted for its own sake, that wars, disease and pestilence are not what every friend of his country or his species should pray for in the first place: that vice in its different shapes is a thing, that the world could do very well without, and that if it could be got rid of altogether, it would be a great gain. In short, that the object both

of the moralist and politician was to diminish as much as possible the quantity of vice and misery existing in the world: without apprehending that by thus effectually introducing more virtue and happiness, more reason and good sense, that by improving the manners of a people, removing pernicious habits and principles of acting, or securing greater plenty, and a greater number of mouths to partake of it, they were doing a disservice to humanity. Then comes Mr. Malthus with his octavo book, and tells us there is another great evil, which had never been found out, or at least not sufficiently attended to till his time, namely excessive population: that this evil was infinitely greater and more to be dreaded than all others put together; and that its approach could only be checked by vice and misery: that any increase of virtue or happiness, was the direct way to hasten it on; and that in proportion as we attempted to improve the condition of mankind, and lessened the restraints of vice and misery, we threw down the only barriers that could protect us from this most formidable scourge of the species, population. Vice, and misery were indeed evils, but they were absolutely necessary evils; necessary to prevent the introduction of others of an incalculably, and inconceivably greater magnitude; and that every proposal to lessen their actual quantity on which the measure of our safety depended, might be attended with the most ruinous consequences, and ought to be looked upon with horror. I think, Sir, this description of the tendency and complexion of Mr. Malthus's first essay is not in the least exaggerated, but an exact and faithful picture of the impression, which it made on every one's mind.

After taking some time to recover from the surprise and hurry into which so great a discovery would naturally throw him, he comes forward again with a large quarto, in which he is at great pains both to say and unsay all that he had said in his former volume, and upon the whole concludes, that population is in itself a good thing, that it is never likely to do much harm, that virtue and happiness ought to be promoted by every practicable means, and that the most effectual as well as desirable check to excessive population is *moral restraint*. The mighty discovery, thus reduced to, and pieced out by common sense, the wonder vanishes, and we breathe a little freely again. Mr. Malthus is however, by no means willing to give up his old doctrine, or *eat his own words*: he stickles stoutly for it at times. He has his fits of reason and his fits of extravagance, his yielding and his obstinate moments, fluctuating between the two, and vibrating backwards and forwards with a dexterity of self-contradiction which it is wonderful to behold. The following passage is so curious in this respect that I cannot help quoting it in this place. Speaking of the reply of the author of the Political Justice to his former work, he

observes, 'But Mr. Godwin says, that if he looks into the past history of the world, he does not see that increasing population has been controlled and confined by vice and misery *alone*. *In this observation I cannot agree with him.* I will thank Mr. Godwin to name to me any check, that in past ages has contributed to keep down the population to the level of the means of subsistence, that does not fairly come under some form of vice or misery; except indeed the check of *moral restraint, which I have mentioned in the course of this work;* and which to say the truth, whatever hopes we may entertain of its prevalence in future, has undoubtedly in past ages operated with very inconsiderable force.'[1] When I assure the reader that I give him this passage fairly and fully, I think he will be of opinion with me, that it would be difficult to produce an instance of a more miserable attempt to reconcile a contradiction by childish evasion, to insist upon an argument, and give it up in the same breath. Does Mr. Malthus really think that he has such an absolute right and authority over this subject of population, that provided he mentions a principle, or shews that he is not ignorant of it, and cannot be caught *napping* by the critics, he is at liberty to say that it has or has not had any operation, just as he pleases, and that the state of the fact is a matter of perfect indifference. He contradicts the opinion of Mr. Godwin that vice and misery are not the only checks to population, and gives as a proof of his assertion, that he himself truly has mentioned another check. Thus after flatly denying that moral restraint has any effect at all, he modestly concludes by saying that it has had some, no doubt, but promises that it will never have a great deal. Yet in the very next page, he says, 'On this sentiment, whether virtue, prudence or pride, which I have already noticed under the name of moral restraint, or of the more comprehensive title, the *preventive* check, it will appear, that in the sequel of this work, I shall lay considerable stress,' p. 385. This kind of reasoning is enough to give one the head-ache. But to take things in their order.

The most singular thing in this singular performance of our author is, that it should have been originally ushered into the world as the most complete and only satisfactory answer to the speculations of Godwin, Condorcet and others, or to what has been called the modern philosophy. A more complete piece of wrong-headedness, a more strange perversion of reason could hardly be devised by the wit of man. Whatever we may think of the doctrine of the progressive improvement of the human mind, or of a state of society in which

[1] The prevalence of this check may be estimated *by the general proportion* of virtue and happiness in the world, for if there had been no such check there could have been nothing but vice and misery.

every thing will be subject to the absolute control of reason, however absurd, unnatural, or impracticable we may conceive such a system to be, certainly it cannot without the grossest inconsistency be objected to it, that such a system would necessarily be rendered abortive, because if reason should ever get this mastery over all our actions, we shall then be governed entirely by our physical appetites and passions, without the least regard to consequences. This appears to me a refinement on absurdity. Several philosophers and speculatists had supposed that a certain state of society very different from any that has hitherto existed was in itself practicable; and that if it were realised, it would be productive of a far greater degree of human happiness than is compatible with the present institutions of society. I have nothing to do with either of these points. I will allow to any one who pleases that all such schemes are 'false, sophistical, unfounded in the extreme.' But I cannot agree with Mr. Malthus that they would be *bad*, in proportion as they were *good*; that their excellence would be their ruin; or that the true and only unanswerable objection against all such schemes is that very degree of *happiness*, virtue and improvement to which they are supposed to give rise. And I cannot agree with him in this because it is contrary to common sense, and leads to the subversion of every principle of moral reasoning. Without perplexing himself with the subtle arguments of his opponents, Mr. Malthus comes boldly forward, and says, 'Gentlemen, I am willing to make you large concessions, I am ready to allow the practicability and the desirableness of your schemes, the more happiness, the more virtue, the more refinement they are productive of the better, all these will only add to the "exuberant strength of my argument"; I have a short answer to all objections, to be sure I found it in an old political receipt-book, called Prospects, &c. by one Wallace, a man not much known, but no matter for that, *finding is keeping*, you know': and with one smart stroke of his wand, on which are inscribed certain mystical characters, and algebraic proportions, he levels the fairy enchantment with the ground. For, says Mr. Malthus, though this improved state of society were actually realised, it could not possibly continue, but must soon terminate in a state of things pregnant with evils far more insupportable than any we at present endure, in consequence of the excessive population which would follow, and the impossibility of providing for its support.

This is what I do not understand. It is, in other words, to assert that the doubling the population of a country, for example, after a certain period, will be attended with the most pernicious effects, by want, famine, bloodshed, and a state of general violence and confusion, this will afterwards lead to vices and practices still worse than the

physical evils they are designed to prevent, &c. and yet that at this period those who will be the most interested in preventing these consequences, and the best acquainted with the circumstances that lead to them will neither have the understanding to foresee, nor the heart to feel, nor the will to prevent the sure evils to which they expose themselves and others, though this advanced state of population, which does not admit of any addition without danger is supposed to be the immediate result of a more general diffusion of the comforts and conveniences of life, of more enlarged and liberal views, of a more refined and comprehensive regard to our own permanent interests, as well as those of others, of corresponding habits and manners, and of a state of things, in which our gross animal appetites will be subjected to the practical control of reason. The influence of rational motives, of refined and long-sighted views of things is supposed to have taken place of narrow, selfish and merely sensual motives: this is implied in the very statement of the question. 'What conjuration and what mighty magic' should thus blind our philosophical descendants on this single subject in which they are more interested than in all the rest, so that they should stand with their eyes open on the edge of a precipice, and instead of retreating from it, should throw themselves down headlong, I cannot comprehend; unless indeed we suppose that the impulse to propagate the species is so strong and uncontrolable that reason has no power over it. This is what Mr. Malthus was at one time strongly disposed to assert, and what he is at present half inclined to retract. Without this foundation to rest on, the whole of his reasoning is unintelligible. It seems to me a most childish way of answering any one, who chooses to assert that mankind are capable of being governed entirely by their reason, and that it would be better for them if they were, to say, No, for if they were governed entirely by it, they would be much less able to attend to its dictates than they are at present: and the evils, which would thus follow from the unrestrained increase of population, would be excessive. —Almost every little Miss, who has had the advantage of a boarding-school education, or been properly tutored by her mamma, whose hair is not of an absolute flame-colour, and who has hopes in time, if she behaves prettily, of getting a good husband, waits patiently year after year, looks about her, rejects or trifles with half a dozen lovers, favouring one, laughing at another, chusing among them 'as one picks pears, saying, this I like, that I loathe,' with the greatest indifference, as if it were no such very pressing affair, and *all the while behaves very prettily*; till she is at last smitten with a handsome house, a couple of footmen in livery, or a black-servant, or a coach with two sleek geldings, with which she is more taken than with her man:—why,

what an idea does Mr. Malthus give us of the grave, masculine genius of our Utopian philosophers, their sublime attainments and gigantic energy, that they will not be able to manage these matters as decently and cleverly as the silliest women can do at present! Mr. Malthus indeed endeavours to soften the absurdity by saying that moral restraint at present owes its strength to selfish motives: what is this to the purpose? If Mr. Malthus chooses to say, that men will always be governed by the same gross mechanical motives that they are at present, I have no objection to make to it; but it is shifting the question: it is not arguing against the state of society we are considering from the consequences to which it would give rise, but against the possibility of its ever existing. It is absurd to object to a system on account of the consequences which would follow if we were to suppose men to be actuated by entirely different motives and principles from what they are at present, and then to say, that those consequences would necessarily follow, because men would never be what we suppose them. It is *very* idle to alarm the imagination by deprecating the evils that must follow from the practical adoption of a particular scheme, yet to allow that we have no reason to dread those consequences, but because the scheme itself is impracticable.—But I am ashamed of wasting your reader's time and my own in thus beating the air. It is not however my fault that Mr. Malthus has written nonsense, or that others have admired it. It is not Mr. Malthus's nonsense, but the opinion of the world respecting it, that I would be thought to compliment by this serious refutation of what in itself neither deserves nor admits of any reasoning upon it. If however we recollect the source from whence Mr. Malthus borrowed his principle and the application of it to improvements in political philosophy, we must allow that he is merely *passive* in error. The principle itself would not have been worth a farthing to him without the application, and accordingly he took them as he found them lying snug together; and as Trim having converted the old jack-boots into a pair of new mortars immediately planted them against whichever of my uncle Toby's garrisons the allies were then busy in besieging, so the public-spirited gallantry of our modern engineer directed him to bend the whole force of his clumsy discovery against that system of philosophy which was the most talked of at the time, but to which it was the least applicable of all others. Wallace, I have no doubt, took up his idea either as a paradox, or a *jeu d'esprit*, or because any thing, he thought, was of weight enough to overturn what had never existed anywhere but in the imagination, or he was led into a piece of false logic by an error we are very apt to fall into, of supposing because he had never been struck himself by the difficulty of population in such

a state of society, that therefore the people themselves would not find it out, nor make any provision against it. But though I can in some measure excuse a lively paradox, I do not think the same favour is to be shewn to the dull, dogged, voluminous repetition of an absurdity.

I cannot help thinking that our author has been too much influenced in his different feelings on this subject, by the particular purpose he had in view at the time. Mr. Malthus might not improperly have taken for the motto of his first edition, 'These three bear record on earth, vice, misery, and population.' In his answer to Mr. Godwin, this principle was represented as an evil, for which no remedy could be found but in evil;—that its operation was mechanical, unceasing, necessary; that it went strait forward to its end, unchecked by fear, or reason, or remorse; that the evils, which it drew after it, could only be avoided by other evils, by actual vice and misery. Population was in fact the great devil, the untamed Beelzebub that was only kept chained down by vice and misery, and that if it were once let loose from these restraints, it would go forth, and ravage the earth. That they were therefore the two main props and pillars of society, and that the lower and weaker they kept this principle, the better able they were to contend with it: that therefore any diminution of that degree of them which at present prevails, and is found sufficient to keep the world in order, was of all things chiefly to be dreaded.—Mr. Malthus seems fully aware of the importance of the stage-maxim, To elevate and surprise. Having once heated the imaginations of his readers, he knows that he can afterwards mould them into whatever shape he pleases. All this bustle and terror, and stage-effect, and theatrical-mummery, was only to serve a temporary purpose, for all of a sudden the scene is shifted, and the storm subsides. Having frighted away the boldest champions of modern philosophy, this monstrous appearance, full of strange and inexplicable horrors, is suffered quietly to shrink back to its natural dimensions, and we find it to be nothing more than a common-sized tame looking animal, which however requires a chain and the whip of its keeper to prevent it from becoming mischievous. Mr. Malthus then steps forward and says, 'the evil we were all in danger of was not population,—but philosophy. Nothing is to be done with the latter by mere reasoning. I therefore thought it right to make use of a little terror to accomplish the end. As to the principle of population you need be under no alarm, only leave it to me and I shall be able to manage it very well. All its dreadful consequences may be easily prevented by a proper application of the motives of common prudence and common decency.' If however any one should be at a loss to know how it is possible to

reconcile such contradictions, I would suggest to Mr. Malthus the answer which Hamlet makes to his friend Guilderstern, ''Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventiges (the poor-rates and private charity) with your fingers and thumb, and this same instrument will discourse most excellent music; look you, here are the stops,' (namely, Mr. Malthus's Essay and Mr. Whitbread's Poor Bill). To sum up the whole of this argument in one word. Let us suppose with Mr. Malthus that population can only be kept down by a certain degree of vice and misery. Let us also suppose that these checks are for a time removed, and that mankind become perfectly virtuous and happy. Well, then, according to the former supposition, this would necessarily lead to an excessive increase of population. Now the question is, to what degree of excess it would lead, and where it would naturally stop. Mr. Malthus, to make good his reasoning, must suppose a miracle to take place; that after population has begun to increase excessively, no inconvenience is felt from it, that in the midst of the 'imminent and immediate' evils which follow from it, people continue virtuous and happy and unconscious of the dangers with which they are surrounded; till of a sudden Mr. Malthus opens the flood-gates of vice and misery, and they are overwhelmed by them, all at once. In short he must suppose either that this extraordinary race of men, in proportion as population increases, are gradually reduced in size, 'and less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room, throng numberless, like that pygmean race beyond the Indian mount, or fairy elves'; or that they have some new world assigned them as a breeding-place, from which attempting to return they are immediately squeezed to death, like people rushing into a crowded theatre. On the other hand, I contend that in the natural course of things, that is, if we suppose people to retain their usual dimensions, to eat, and drink, and beget children, and bring them up in the usual way, all this could never happen: for it is impossible but they must see and feel that there was only room for a certain number. The moment population became excessive from the *excess* of virtue and happiness, its inconveniences would return, and people would no longer be *perfectly virtuous and happy*: that is, the old checks of a certain degree of vice and misery would come into play again, and a less degree of them (I suppose about as much as we enjoy the advantage of at present) would be sufficient to deter men from plunging into greater, would put a stop to the further increase of population, and anticipate those tremendous evils which Mr. Malthus apprehends from it, which could never happen unless we suppose people to have come to a previous, deliberate resolution mutually to starve one another to death. There is therefore no foundation for

the alarm given by Mr. Malthus, for vice and misery are such ready and sure resources that we can be at a loss for them at no time; and farther with respect to the state of society supposed by Mr. Malthus, that is if we could once drive vice and misery out of the world, I really do not see what occasion we should have for them afterwards.

The most important question yet remains, which is not how Mr. Malthus came by his discovery, nor whether he was right in endeavouring to exemplify it in the first instance by shewing its effects on an imaginary state of society where it would be naturally disarmed of its malignity, but whether the practical conclusions he has drawn from it are not of weight and moment in themselves, and whether they are not established so clearly and fully as to make it necessary for us to reverse almost entirely all our old reasonings on the principles of political economy. I confess, I have some difficulty in determining, whether Mr. Malthus's principles do or do not materially affect the commonly received notions on this subject, because I really do not know what those principles are, and till Mr. Malthus himself tells us, whether he would have us believe in the new revelation or the old, it is impossible that any one should. If we are to consider those as Mr. Malthus's real and chastized opinions which are the least like himself, which most flatly contradict his former assertions, which being forced from him may be looked upon as confessions of the truth, I see nothing in these that in any manner interferes with the common sense of mankind. And though Mr. Malthus still perseveres in almost all his extreme conclusions, yet as those conclusions are for the most part unwarrantable assumptions, disproved even by his own concessions, and shew nothing more than Mr. Malthus's qualifications for the delicate office of conscience-keeper to the rich and great, I am so far from considering them as new and important discoveries, that I must be excused if I consider them as in the highest degree false and dangerous, and treat them accordingly.

LETTER IV

ON THE GENERAL TENDENCY OF POPULATION TO EXCESS

Sir,—Mr. Malthus's argument against a state of *unlimited* improvement, of perfect wisdom, virtue and happiness, from the vice, misery, and madness inseparable from such a state would, if admitted, be an effectual bar to all limited improvement whatever. It is for this

reason, that I have dwelt so long on the subject. If out of timidity, or complaisance, or prejudice against an unpopular system, we suffer ourselves to be wheedled into a silly persuasion, that the worst thing that could happen for the human race would be their being able to realise not in words only, but in deed all the fine things, that have been said of them, we then fairly throw ourselves upon the mercy of our adversaries. For what is there in this case, to hinder Mr. Malthus, or any one else, from representing every degree of practical improvement as an approximation to this deplorable crisis, from binding up the slips and scyons of human happiness with this great trunk of evil, and root of all our woe, from marking with his slider and graduated scale all our advances towards this ideal perfection, however partial or necessary, as so many deviations from the strict line of our duty, and only sphere of our permanent happiness? It is evident, that the only danger of all imaginary schemes of improvement arises from their being *exaggerations* of the real capacities of our nature, from supposing that we can pick out all the dross, and leave nothing but the gold; that is, from their being carried to excess, and aiming at more than is practicable. But if we allow that improvement is an evil in the abstract, and that the greater the improvement, the greater the mischief, that the actual and complete success of all such schemes would be infinitely worse even than their failure, for that the most complete and extensive improvement would only prepare the way for the most deplorable wretchedness, and that the very next step after reaching the summit of human glory would plunge us into the lowest abyss of vice and misery,—why truly there will be little encouragement to set out on a journey that promises so very disagreeable a conclusion; such a representation of the matter will not add wings to our zeal for practical reform, but will rather make us stop short in our career, and refuse to advance one step farther in a road, that is beset with danger and destruction. People will begin to look with a jaundiced eye at the most obvious advantages, to resist every useful regulation, and dread every change for the better. Our feelings are governed very much by common-place associations, and are most influenced by that sort of logic which is the shortest. Thus, 'that the parts are contained in the whole,' is a general rule which is found to hold good in most of the concerns of life; and it is not therefore easy to drive it out of people's heads. For this reason, it will always be difficult to persuade the generality of mankind that a less degree of improvement is a good thing, though a greater would be a bad thing, or that the subordinate parts of a system, that would in reality embody all the ills of life, can be very desirable in themselves. Mr. Malthus has however by no means left this conclusion

to the mere mechanical operation of our feelings. He endeavours formally to establish it. The following passage seems the connecting link in the chain, which unites the two worlds of theory and practice together; it cements the argument, gives solidity and roundness to it, and renders it complete against all improvement, real or imaginary, present or future, against all absolute perfection or imperfect attempts at it, and gradual approaches to it. It fairly blocks up the road.

'It cannot but be a matter of astonishment that all writers on the perfectibility of man, and of society, who have noticed the argument of an overcharged population, treat it always very slightly, and invariably represent the difficulties arising from it, as at a great, and almost immeasurable distance. Even Mr. Wallace, who thought the argument itself of so much weight as to destroy his whole system of equality, did not seem to be aware that any difficulty would occur from this cause, till the whole earth had been cultivated like a garden, and was incapable of any further increase of produce. Were this really the case, and were a beautiful system of equality in other respects practicable, I cannot think that our ardour in the pursuit of such a scheme ought to be damped by the contemplation of so remote a difficulty. An event at such a distance might fairly be left to providence; but the truth is, that if the view of the argument given in this Essay be just, the difficulty so far from being remote, would be imminent and immediate. *At every period during the progress of cultivation*, from the present moment to the time when the whole earth was become like a garden, *the distress for want of food would be constantly pressing on all mankind*, if they were equal. Though the produce of the earth *might be increasing every year*, population *would be increasing much faster*; and the redundancy must *necessarily* be repressed by the periodical or constant action of vice and misery.'[1]

In answer to this statement (allowing however that it is a fair inference from Wallace's reasoning, and from our author's own principle) I would simply ask, whether *during this progress of cultivation, the distress for want of food would be constantly pressing on all mankind* more than it does at present. Let us suppose that men remain just as vicious, as imprudent, as regardless of their own interests and those of others as they are at present, let us suppose

[1] In the second edition, it says, *moral restraint*, vice or misery. What are we to think of a man who writes a book to prove that vice and misery are the only security for the happiness of the human race, and then writes another to say, that vice and folly are not the only security, but that our only resource must be either in vice and folly, or in wisdom and virtue? This is like making a white skin part of the definition of a man, and defending it by saying that they are all *white*, except those who are *black* or *tawny*.

them to continue just what they are, through all the stages of improved cultivation to the time when the whole earth was become like a garden, would this in the smallest degree detract from the benefit? Would nothing indeed be gained by the earth's being cultivated like a garden, that is, by its producing ten times the quantity of food that it does at present, and being able to maintain ten times the quantity of inhabitants in the same degree of comfort and happiness that it does at present, because forsooth they would not at the same time be ten times better off than they are now? Is it an argument against adding to the happiness of mankind ten-fold, by increasing their number, their condition remaining the same, that we cannot add to it a hundred-fold, by increasing their number and improving their condition proportionably? Or is it any objection to increasing the means of subsistence by the improved cultivation of the earth, that the population would keep pace with it? It appears to me that there must be a particular perversity, some egregious bias in the mind of any person who can either deny the inference to be drawn from these questions, or evade it as a matter of indifference, by equivocation and subterfuge. We might as well assert that because it is most likely that the inhabitants of the rest of Europe are not better, nor indeed quite so well off as the people of England, that it would therefore be no matter if the whole continent of Europe were sunk in the sea, as if human life was merely to be considered as a sample of what the thing is, and as if when we have a sample of a certain quality, all the rest might be very well spared, as of no value. As however I conceive that Mr. Malthus is not a man to be moved either by common feelings or familiar illustrations, I shall venture to lay down one dry maxim on the subject, which he will get over as well as he can, namely, that an improved cultivation of the earth, and a consequent increase of food must necessarily lead to one or other of these two consequences, either that a greater number of people will be maintained in the same degree of comfort and happiness, other things being the same, or that means will be afforded for maintaining an equal number in greater ease, plenty, and affluence. It is plain either that existence is upon the whole a blessing and that the means of existence are on that account desirable; that consequently an increased population is doubly a blessing, and an increase in the means of existence doubly desirable; or else life is an evil, and whatever tends to promote it is an evil, and in this case it would be well if all the inhabitants of the earth were to die of some easy death to-morrow!

For my own part, 'who am no great clerk,' I cannot by any efforts, of which I am capable, separate these two propositions, that

it is desirable either that population should have stood still at first, or that it should go on increasing till the earth is absolutely full; or in other words, I see no rational alternative between the principle of extermination (as far as it is in our power) and the principle of the utmost possible degree of populousness. It is, I conceive, an incontrovertible axiom, that the proportion between the population and food being given (and Mr. Malthus tells us that it holds nearly the same in all the stages of society) the actual increase of population is to be considered as so much clear gain, as so much got into the purse, as so much addition to the sum of human happiness. Mr. Malthus says in another place (second edition, p. 357), 'The only point in which I differ from M. Condorcet in this description' [of the evils arising from increased population,] 'is with regard to the period, when it may be applied to the human race. M. Condorcet thinks that it cannot possibly be applicable, but at an æra extremely distant. If the proportion between the natural increase of population and food, which was stated in the beginning of this essay, and which has received considerable confirmation *from the poverty that has been found to prevail in every stage and department of human society*, be in any degree near the truth, it will appear on the contrary, that the period, when the number of men surpass their means of subsistence, has long since arrived, &c.' Mr. Malthus in different parts of his work makes a great *rout* about the distinction between *actual* and *relative* population, and lays it down that an actual increase of population is an advantage, except when it exceeds the means of subsistence; yet he here seems to treat the proportion between the increase of population, and food, which he says has always continued pretty much the same, as the only thing to be attended to, and to represent the progressive increase of the actual population, unless we could at the same time banish poverty entirely from the world, as a matter of the most perfect indifference, or rather as the most dangerous experiment, that could be tried. Is not this being wilfully blind to the consequences of his own reasoning? Oh! but, says Mr. Malthus, you do not state the case fairly. If men were to continue what they are at present; if there were the same proportionable quantity of vice, and misery in the world, what you say would be true. Every thing would then go on as well, or indeed better than before. But this is impossible, because this increased cultivation, and a more equal distribution of the produce of the earth could only take place, in consequence of the increased civilization, virtue, good sense, and happiness of mankind: and this would necessarily spoil all. For remove the present quantity of vice and misery existing in the world, and you remove the only checks, that can keep population down. 'Though the produce of the earth might be increasing every year,

the population would be increasing much faster; and the redundancy must be repressed by the old restraints of vice and misery.' That is to say, though (according to the second edition) vice, misery, and moral restraint, operate mutually as checks to population, and though the diminution of vice and misery could only be the consequence of the increased strength in the principle of moral restraint, yet this latter principle would in reality have no effect at all, and in proportion as the other checks to population, viz. vice and misery, were superseded, they would become more and more necessary. If there could be a gradual, and indefinite improvement in the cultivation of the soil, and every facility could be afforded for the supply of an increasing population, without supposing some change in the institutions of society, which would render men better and wiser, than they now are, Mr. Malthus will perhaps with some reluctance, and uncertainty hanging over his mind, allow that this would be a considerable advantage; the population might in this case be kept within some bounds, and not increase faster than the means of subsistence: but as this is a change that cannot be looked for without supposing a correspondent improvement in the morals and characters of men, we must set off one thing against another, and give up the chance of improvement, to prevent the shocking alternative connected with it. With our present *modicum* of wit and command over our passions, we do contrive in some measure to make both ends meet, or to cut our coat according to our cloth, or look before we leap, and are not carried away, neck or nothing, by this high-mettled courser, Population, over all the fences and barriers of common sense. But if we were to make any considerable improvements in horsemanship, or in our *knack* at calculation, we should instantly, belying all reasonable expectation, throw the bridle on the horse's neck, rush blindly forward in spite of all obstacles, and freed from the shackles of necessity without having acquired the discipline of reason, though the one always instantly resumes its sway, the moment the other ceases, plunge into all the miseries of famine, without remorse, or apprehension.

This I conceive is an express contradiction in terms. Yet I grant that it is a logical inference from Mr. Malthus's original statement, that vice and misery are the only adequate checks to population. If this were indeed the case, all the consequences that Mr. Malthus describes, the utmost degree of vice and misery, would necessarily be the lot of man in all stages and departments of society, whether in his improved or unimproved state, because in all cases and at all times his reason would be of no use to him. However great or however small our attainments in arts or science, or in all other virtues might be, in this respect we should still be the same; that is,

we should be exactly in the condition of the brutes, entirely governed by an impulse, over which we should have neither check nor control. Mr. Malthus, however, finding that this account is inconsistent with the state of human life, and with those checks which certainly do keep population back from going its natural lengths, now adds moral restraint as a convenient supplement to his theory, and as our chief security against vice and misery, though he still insists that where its effect must be greatest, it would have no effect at all. He gives up his principle, but retains his conclusion, to which he has no right. He is like a bad poet who to get rid of a false concord alters the ending of his first line, and forgets that he has spoiled his rhyme in the second. On the whole, then, it appears, that at no one period during the progress of cultivation from the present moment to the time when it should have reached its utmost limits, would the distress for want of food be greater than it is at present. In the mean time, the number of mankind, and consequently their happiness would go on increasing with the means of their happiness, or subsistence, till the whole earth had been cultivated like a garden, and was incapable of any further increase, and we should then be exactly where we are now with respect to the checks on population. That is, the earth would maintain ten times its present number of inhabitants in the same comfort as at present, without our having involved ourselves in any of those straits and difficulties, those pits and snares, against which we are so kindly warned by Mr. Malthus. The population, and the means of subsistence would indeed be stationary, but so they may be said to be at present. The only difference is that they are at present unnecessarily stationary from artificial causes, from moral and political circumstances; in that case the line would be drawn by nature herself, in other words, by the limited extent of the earth, and by its limited fertility. *This being the case and were a beautiful system of equality in other respects practicable*, (for observe, reader, I leave the question as *to those other respects* exactly where I found it) *I cannot think that our ardour in pursuit of such a scheme can in any wise be damped by the contemplation of the difficulties attendant upon it from the principle of population.* All that could be gained, would be pure gain without any loss whatever. In short, the principle of population does not, as I conceive, affect the future improvement of society in any way whatever, whether on a larger or a smaller scale, theoretically or practically, generally, or particularly. I have thus, Sir, endeavoured to answer Mr. Malthus's argument against the improved cultivation of the earth, and an increase of population, from the increased difficulties (as he falsely represents them), that would all the way press upon society during its progress. He has rendered

his paradox in some measure palatable to the reader, by introducing it as one branch of his answer to Condorcet, and others of the same school, herein imitating the policy of the house of commons, who sometimes prevail on the house of lords to pass a bill which they do not much like, by tacking a money-bill to it. However as the two subjects are entirely distinct, I beg that they may not be confounded. The question is simply, whether we are to look upon the progress of agriculture, civilization, and the populousness which would follow, (no matter to what extent, nor by whom it is brought about, whether it is projected by a junto of philosophers, or decided upon in a committee of the house of commons, enlightened by the genius of Mr. Malthus and guided by Mr. Whitbread's wisdom), whether I say, as a general principle we are to look upon an addition to the inhabitants of a state, if there is enough to support them, as a good or an evil. Mr. Malthus has chosen to answer this question under the head, *modern philosophy*, so that he is secure of the protection of the court. I have been willing not to deprive him of this advantage, and have answered it under the same head. If however any of my readers should dislike the argument in this connection, they may easily take it out of the mould in which it is cast, without doing it the least hurt. To shew how lightly all schemes of improvement sit on Mr. Malthus's mind, how easily he thinks they may be puffed aside with the least breath of sophistry, it will be sufficient to quote the following passage. After allowing in general that even the best cultivated countries in Europe might be made to produce double what they do at present, he says, 'We should not be too ready to make inferences against the internal economy of a country from the appearance of uncultivated heaths without other evidence.' [It is wonderful with what slowness and circumspection Mr. Malthus always proceeds in his disapprobation of any thing, that comes in the prepossessing garb of an evil. He is only confident and severe in his decisions against those hidden mischiefs, which lie concealed under a delusive appearance of good. There is something in the prospect of dearth and barrenness which is perfectly congenial to the disposition of Mr. Malthus. He is unwilling to give up a subject which promises so much scope for his singular talents of bringing good out of evil.] 'But the fact is, that as no country has ever reached, or probably will ever reach its highest possible acme of produce, it *appears always*, as if the want of industry, or the ill-direction of that industry was the actual limit to a further increase of produce and population, and not the absolute refusal of nature to yield any more; but a man who is locked up in a room, may be fairly said to be confined by the walls of it, *though he may never touch* them; and with regard to the

principle of population, it is never the question whether a country will produce *any more*, but whether it may be made to produce a sufficiency to keep pace with an unchecked increase of people.' This I confess is a singular passage for a practical philosopher to write. Mr. Malthus here lays it down that the question is not whether we should do all the good we can, but whether we should do what we cannot. As to his illustration of a man locked up in a room, though it is smart and clever, it is not much to the purpose. The case is really that of a man who has the range of a suite of rooms and who in a fit of the spleen, or from indolence, or stupidity, or from any other cause you please, confines himself to one of them, or of a man who having hired a large commodious apartment, says, I never make use of the whole of this apartment, I never go within a foot of the walls, I might as well have it partitioned off, it would be snugger and warmer, and so still finding that he does not run against his partition any more than against the wall, should continue, being determined to have no unnecessary spare-room, to hemm himself in closer and closer till at last he would be able to stir neither hand nor foot. That any one, allowing as Mr. Malthus does, that with proper management and industry this country might be made to maintain *double* its present number of inhabitants, or twenty millions instead of ten, should at the same time affect to represent this as a mere trifling addition, that practically speaking cannot be taken into the account, can I think only be explained by supposing in that person either an extreme callousness of feeling, or which amounts to pretty much the same thing, a habit of making his opinions entirely subservient to his convenience, or to any narrow purpose he may have in view at the moment.—Perhaps if the truth were known, I am as little sanguine in my expectations of any great improvement to be made in the condition of human life either by the visions of philosophy, or by downright, practical, parliamentary projects, as Mr. Malthus himself can be. But the matter appears to me thus. It requires some exertion and some freedom of will to keep even where we are. If we tie up our hands, shut our eyes to the partial advantages we possess, and cease to exert ourselves in that direction in which we can do it with the most effect, we shall very soon 'go deep in the negative series.' Take away the hope and the tendency to improvement, and there is nothing left to counteract the opposite never-failing tendency of human things 'from bad to worse.' There is therefore a serious practical reason against losing sight of the object, even when we cannot attain it. However, I am 'free to confess' (to borrow the language of my betters) that there is as much selfishness as public spirit in my resistance to Mr. Malthus's

contradictions. It is a remote question whether the world will ever be much wiser than it is: but what I am certainly interested in, is not to submit to have all my ideas confounded by barren sophistry, nor to give up the little understanding which I may actually possess. Nor for my own part, were I confined to my room, should I think myself obliged to any one for blocking up my view of a pleasant prospect, because I could not move from the place, where I was.

The fundamental principle of Mr. Malthus's essay is that population has a constant tendency to become excessive, because it has a tendency to increase not only in a progressive, but in a geometrical ratio, whereas the means of subsistence are either positively limited, or at most can only be made to increase in an arithmetical ratio. But to be sure of avoiding any thing like misrepresentation in this part of the argument, where the least error or omission might be fatal to our author's whole scheme, let us take his own words.

'It may be safely affirmed that population when unchecked goes on doubling itself every twenty-five years, or increases in a geometrical ratio.

'That we may be the better able to compare the increase of population and food, let us make a supposition, which without pretending to accuracy, is clearly more favourable to the power of production in the earth, than any experience that we have had of its qualities will warrant.

'Let us suppose that the yearly additions which might be made to the former average produce, instead of decreasing, which they certainly would do, were to remain the same; and that the produce of this island might be increased every twenty-five years by a quantity equal to what it at present produces; the most enthusiastic speculator cannot suppose a greater increase than this. In a few centuries it would make every acre of land in the island like a garden.

'If this supposition be applied to the whole earth, and if it be allowed that the subsistence for man which the earth affords, might be increased every twenty-five years by a quantity equal to what it at present produces; this will be supposing a rate of increase much greater than we can imagine that any possible exertions of mankind could make it.

'It may be fairly pronounced therefore that considering the present average state of the earth, the means of subsistence, under circumstances the most favourable to human industry, could not possibly be made to increase faster than in an arithmetical ratio.

'The necessary effects of these two different rates of increase, when brought together, will be very striking. Let us call the

population of this island eleven millions; and suppose the present produce equal to the easy support of such a number. In the first twenty-five years the population would be twenty-two millions, and the food being also doubled, the means of subsistence would be equal to this increase. In the next twenty-five years, the population would be forty-four millions, and the means of subsistence only equal to the support of thirty-three millions. In the next period, the population would be eighty-eight millions, and the means of subsistence just equal to the support of half that number. And at the conclusion of the first century, the population would be a hundred and seventy-six millions, and the means of subsistence only equal to the support of fifty-five millions; leaving a population of a hundred and twenty-one millions totally unprovided for.

'Taking the whole earth instead of this island, emigration would of course be excluded: and supposing the present population equal to a thousand millions, the human species would increase as the numbers 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, and subsistence as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. In two centuries the population would be to the means of subsistence as 256 to 9; in three centuries as 4096 to 13, and in two thousand years, the difference would be almost incalculable.

'In this supposition no limits whatever are placed to the produce of the earth. It may increase for ever, and be greater than any assignable quantity; yet still *the power of population being in every period* so much superior, the increase of the human species can only be kept down to the level of the means of subsistence by the *constant operation of the strong law of necessity* acting as a check upon the greater power;' or as he elsewhere expresses it '*by misery or the fear of misery.*'

Oh! my good Sir, spare your calculations. We do not wish to be informed what would be the exact proportion of the *imaginary* means of subsistence to the *imaginary* population at a period, and at a rate of increase, at which, if it had been possible for it to have gone on only half so long as you suppose, the whole race would have been long ago *actually* extinct. Mr. Malthus here treats us as the fantastical landlord treated *Sancho Panza*, by giving him a magnificent list of a great variety of delicacies, which it appeared on examination were not to be had, but made no mention of an excellent dish of cow-heel, which was the only thing he had in the house, and which exactly suited the stomach of the squire. I am, like Sancho, disposed to be satisfied with what I can get; and therefore I must fairly tell Mr. Malthus that if he will only spare me that first ratio of his, of a doubled population with respect to this island, or to the whole

earth (though there, begging his pardon, if all other things went right, his arithmetical and geometrical distinction would not as I have shewn come into play for some time), I say if he will allow, as far as the principle of population is concerned, that it is possible to double the number of inhabitants of this country or of the world without any injury, I shall be perfectly content with this concession: this first ratio shall be to me the golden number of Pythagoras, and he may do as he pleases with all the remaining links of an impossible series, which he has started only, I imagine, as we throw out a tub to a whale by way of diversion. As to any serious argument, it is perfectly immaterial, perfectly irrelevant to the question, *whether we should double our population*, that we cannot forsooth go on doubling it for ever; unless indeed it could be shewn that by thus doubling it once, when we can do it without any inconvenience, we should be irresistibly impelled to go on doubling it afterwards when it would have become exceedingly inconvenient, and in fact till the consequence would be general famine and the most extensive misery. Without this addition to his argument, either expressed or implied, Mr. Malthus's double series is of no use or avail whatever: it looks very pretty upon paper, and reads very neat, but is of no practical importance. The evils which it describes so accurately as arising from the increased disproportion between the ratios at every step are mere imaginary things, existing no where but in the morbid enthusiasm of Mr. Malthus's mind, unless we suppose that every increase of the existing population, either with or without a proportionable increase in the means of subsistence, is a vicious habit, a species of phrensy, where one step only leads to another, till we are plunged into irretrievable ruin. But I would ask, supposing the inhabitants of a country to have increased gradually in consequence of an increase in the means of subsistence, from two millions to four, how that population of four millions would have a greater tendency to excess, than the present population of two millions? Would not the same sense of inconvenience, the same dread of poverty, the same regard to the comforts of life, operate in the same way and just as much upon every individual of the four millions, as upon every individual of the two millions? What then becomes of the increased tendency to excessive population in consequence of its actual increase? Yet without this, an increased population is not in itself an evil, or a good necessarily leading to evil, but a pure and unmixed good unconnected with any greater evil.

Even our author's own account will give us a new country and a new earth; it will double all the happiness and all the enjoyment

that there is at present in the world. If he had been a man of sanguine or poetical feelings, methinks this single consideration would have been enough to have made his heart leap up with a lively joy—to see 'fast by hanging in a golden chain this pendant world,' &c. but he is a man whom you may call rather of a saturnine than of a sanguine disposition. He therefore had no leisure to behold this cheering object, but passes on 'to nature's farthest verge,' till he enters once more into 'the confines of Chaos, and the bosom of dim night.' Mr. Malthus somewhere speaks familiarly of the association of ideas, as if he were acquainted with that doctrine. He has here at any rate very skilfully availed himself of that kind of reasoning, which owes all its weight to that mechanical principle. In all the stages of an unchecked population, except the first, it having appeared that there is a great disproportion between this principle and the progress of agriculture, our author concludes that his readers will forget that that, which is so often represented as an evil, can ever be a good, and therefore peremptorily adds, in defiance of his own statement, that in *every period* of the increase, the power of population is much superior to the other. Though it appears to me then that Mr. Malthus by his ratios has gained nothing in point of argument over his readers, he has gained much upon their imagination. By representing population so often as an evil, and by magnifying its increase in certain cases as so enormous an evil, he raises a general prejudice against it. Whenever you talk of any improvement or any increase of population consequent upon it, he immediately plays off his infinite series against you. He makes the transition from a practicable to an impracticable increase of population, from that degree of it, which is desirable to that which is excessive, by the assistance of his mathematical scale, as easily as you pass from the low notes of a harpsichord to the high ones. There seems no division between them. It is true that so long as we confine ourselves to the real question before us and distinguish between what is practicable, and what can never possibly happen, the evil consequences of the system we contend for are merely chimerical. But as Hercules in order to strangle the earth-born Antæus was obliged to lift him from the ground, Mr. Malthus, in order to complete his triumph over common sense, is obliged to call to his aid certain airy speculations and fanciful theories of dangers, that, by his own confession, can never possibly exist. Whenever you are for setting out on the road of reform, Mr. Malthus stops you on the threshold, and says, Do you consider where you are going? Don't you know where this road will lead you? and then, with a 'come on, sir, here's the place: look how fearful and dizzy 'tis to cast one's eye

so low'; he hurries you forward to his imaginary precipice, and shews you the danger you have so narrowly escaped. However, it is not Mr. Malthus's rhetoric, but our own wilful blindness, that must persuade us that we have escaped being dashed to pieces down any precipices, when he himself tells us that the road is nothing more than a long winding declivity.

I conceive there were two very capital errors in Mr. Malthus's first essay, which though he has abandoned or in a great measure softened them down in his subsequent edition, still adhere to all his reasonings, and give them a wrong bias. The first of these was, that vice and misery are the only checks to population: secondly, that if population were for any time freed from these restraints, it would in that case go on increasing with a force and rapidity, which nothing would be able to withstand, and which would bear down the feeble mounds that had before opposed its progress till the whole would end in one wide scene of universal uproar and confusion. As if, in the first place, mere misery of itself, without a sense of greater misery, and a desire to avoid it, would do any thing to prevent population; and in the second place, as if though the tax of vice and misery were taken off for a time, yet the recurrence of the same evils afterwards would not operate in the same way to repress population, or as if population would in the mean time have acquired any preternatural strength, with which its counteracting causes would be unable to contend, or as if the mere mechanical checks to population from the actual evils attendant upon it were not always necessarily a match for, and proportioned to, the strength of the principle itself, and its immediate tendency to excess. It is astonishing to see how those men, who pique themselves the most on the solidity of their understandings, and on a kind of dull matter-of-fact plodding accuracy, are perpetually led away by their imaginations: the more so because they are the dupes of their own vanity, and never suspect that they are liable to any such deception. In the present instance our author has been hurried into an unfounded assumption by having his imagination heated with a *personification*. He has given to the principle of population a personal existence, conceiving of it as a sort of infant Hercules, as one of that terrific giant brood, which you can only master by strangling it in its cradle; forgetting that the antagonist principle which he has made its direct counterpoise, still grows with its growth and strengthens with its strength, being in fact its own offspring: and that the sharper evils which excessive population brings along with it, more severe in proportion to its excess, naturally tend to repress and keep population down to the same level, other circumstances being supposed the same. Nothing can be clearer to

my understanding than this; yet it is upon the misrepresentation or misconception of this principle that most of Mr. Malthus's sophisms and ambiguities hinge.

It is necessary to make a distinction between the tendency in population to increase, and its power to increase; otherwise we may fall into great errors. The power of population to increase is an abstract thing independent of circumstances, and which is therefore always the same. Its effects may therefore be very well described by a mathematical series. When we speak of the power of population to increase in a certain continued ratio, we do not mean to say that it will or will not do so, but merely that it is possible that it should do so from the nature of the principle itself. The power of population to increase is in fact the same both before and after it has become excessive. But I conceive this is not the case with its *tendency* to increase, unless we mean its *unchecked tendency*, which is saying nothing; for if we speak of its real tendency to increase, this certainly is not always the same, but depends exceedingly on circumstances, that is, is greater or less in proportion as the population is or is not excessive. The ratio in which Mr. Malthus has represented population as having a natural tendency to increase, can therefore only relate to its unchecked progress, or to its increase while the means of subsistence can be made to keep pace with it; inasmuch as it has an actual tendency to increase in this ratio, only while it is free from checks; but the moment these checks begin to operate it is necessarily limited by them, or kept down within a certain point to the level of the means of subsistence. In short, as a practical guide, Mr. Malthus's table is extremely fallacious; for the population has a tendency to go on as 1, 2, 4, 8, &c. only while the subsistence answers to it, or is as 1, 2, 4, 8, &c. and when the means of subsistence can only be made to increase as 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. then the population will, in the natural course of things, come down to it and increase only as 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. or supposing it to have generally a certain tendency to excess, it will then increase as $1\frac{1}{4}$, $2\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{3}{4}$, 5, &c. The actual, positive, practical tendency in population *to increase* is not therefore always the same, and for that very reason its tendency *to excess* is always the same, neither greater nor less, in consequence of the absolute increase in population. Mr. Malthus himself admits fully the distinction between the actual increase of population and its excessive increase, between the tendency of population to increase with the means of subsistence and its tendency to increase beyond those means. In fact, almost one half of his voluminous work is taken up by extensive historical researches to prove that the population is in all ages and countries, in every form of society, and stage of

civilization kept down *nearly* to the means of subsistence: that population has not therefore at one time more than another, when it is strong than when it is weak, in an improved than in a neglected state of cultivation, a tendency to rush on beyond its necessary limits: yet if there is any one inference to be drawn from the general spirit and tenor of Mr. Malthus's reasonings, it is this, that we ought not to encourage population, nor be anxious about the increase of the means of subsistence, but ought rather to keep them back as much as possible, because every addition made to population by whatever means or in whatever circumstances, has a direct and unavoidable tendency to make it go on increasing with an accelerated force; or that the positive benefit of an enlarged population is always counterbalanced by the increased danger of the excess to which it naturally leads. Mr. Malthus by setting a certain degree of plenty against a certain degree of excessive population, has made it appear as if the two things were inseparably connected, as if supposing a certain progress made in the one ratio you may then by passing over to the opposite line see immediately what progress had been made at the same time in the other, that is, what quantity of actual and excessive population, proportioned to the increase in the means of subsistence and its immediate consequence, would require to be cut off by forcible and unnatural means, by vice and misery. It therefore looks very much as if plenty were the immediate fore-runner of famine, as if by sowing the seeds of virtue and happiness you were ensuring a larger harvest of vice and misery, the evil engrafted on any good being always greater than the real benefit itself, and as if by advancing population and increasing the means of its support, you were only opening a new Iliad of woes, and giving larger scope to the baneful operation of this principle. So that it is not the increase of good that we are to think of, but the introduction of evil that we are to guard against. The proportion by which we are to be guided is clear and demonstrable; it is as 256 to 9, and so regularly through all the gradations upwards and downwards. At this rate it is pretty clear that our only object must be to confine human happiness within as narrow limits, and to keep the population down as low as possible, at least to suffer no addition to it. We are something in the condition of a man suspended on a balance with sharp-pointed spikes placed close to his body, and who must not stir for his life. Now the source of this fallacy (on which the whole turns, for without it it is null and abortive) lies here, namely in supposing that of the two ratios here connected together, the one is the cause of, or has any thing to do with the other. For the ratio in the upper line being at number 256 does not depend on

the other ratio being at number 9, but simply on its being so many removes from the root or first number. It only expresses a possible or imaginary series, or the independent, direct, physical power of increase, or abstract tendency to increase in population at each step, and what that increase would amount to in a given number of steps, being left entirely to itself. If it expresses any thing else, or the actual increase of population combined with and in reference to the means of subsistence, it is utterly false and delusive, and a contradiction in terms. For population as regulated by, and arising out of the means of subsistence cannot have got the start of it in so prodigious a manner, and as unconnected with the increase of the latter cannot depend upon it. In the one case, population instead of being to the means of subsistence as 256 to 9, will only be a little ahead of it, or as $9\frac{1}{2}$ to 9: in the other case it will be as 256, whether the food has in a given time increased from 1 to 9, or only from 1 to 6, or whether it has stood still at 1. The number of inhabitants from the beginning of the world, proceeding by the geometrical ratio, would have been going on just the same whether they had ever had any thing to eat or not (they are a kind of enchanted people who live without food) whether the quantity of food had been more or less, whether there has been any improvements in agriculture or not. Though the improvements in agriculture had stood still at 1 in the arithmetical scale this would not lessen or alter the height to which the geometrical scale would have mounted in the interval. 'It keeps on its way unslacked of motion.' By advancing in the arithmetical scale or increasing the means of subsistence, you do not advance the geometrical scale, much less by increasing the disproportion between the two, do you increase the *waste* population of the world, which must be greater in proportion as less of it had been provided for. On the other hand, you necessarily lessen this disproportion. For instead of supposing that if we had remained at 1 in the lower scale, we should then have been at 1 in the upper, or that if we had advanced no further than 3, the disproportion would then only have been 4 to 3, and so on, whereas by going on it is now as 256 to 9, the fact is that the disproportion instead of being as 256 to 9, would have been 256 to 1, or 2, or 3: and that the further we go in the one scale, though we cannot keep up with, or overtake the other, yet we lose so much the less ground and are nearer it than we should otherwise be. To argue otherwise is to be like the children who when they cannot keep up with others, stand still and begin to cry, thinking this the likeliest way to make them slacken their pace. I shall therefore beg leave to look upon every increase in the means of subsistence or actual population, as

so much gained upon the *infinite series*: by keeping back the *actual* means of subsistence, I do not lessen the *possible* or abstract tendency of population to increase, and I only add to its actual tendency to increase in proportion as I add to its actual means of support. We have therefore a clear addition to its actual quantity without any addition to its tendency to excess, or without strengthening the evil principle, the germ of incalculable mischief, which population contains within it. Mr. Malthus has taken no pains to guard his readers against the conclusion, that by increasing the actual population, you increase its actual tendency to increase, as if either the disposition to propagate the species were stronger in proportion to the number of those who possess it, or as if in proportion as the power is spread over a larger surface, it were not counteracted by being accompanied in each individual with a proportionable share of common sense and reason, so that he will not be a bit more likely to run upon famine because there will be twice as many to keep him company as there used to be. The tendency to excessive population in any community does not depend upon the number of individuals in it, who have the power of abusing their liberty, or on the quantity of mischief they *might* do, but upon the moral character of the individuals composing it, upon the difference between the strength of moral restraint and the strength of physical appetite, or on the actual inconvenience to which they *will* submit for the sake of gratifying their passions. In short the tendency to excess does not depend on the point in the scale where the *limit* is drawn, but upon the tendency to overleap that limit; now this tendency or *impetus* is not increased by the distance which it has gone, like a stone rolling down a hill, or like a torrent of water accumulating, but is like a cart or waggon left on a declivity with a drag-chain fastened to one of the wheels, which is carried forward till the chain is pulled tight and then it stops of itself. This is a very clumsy comparison, but it has some resemblance to the thing. We are not to calculate the actual tendency to excess in population by the excess of the power itself over the means of subsistence, which is greater as we advance, but by the excess of the power restrained by other motives and principles over the means of subsistence. In algebraic language the tendency to excess is not equal to the power of population simply, but to the power, *minus* the difficulty of providing for its support, or the influence which that difficulty has on the conduct of rational beings.

If we suppose a barren island with half a dozen savages upon it, living upon roots, vermin, and crawfish, without any of the arts or any of the conveniences of life, ignorant of agriculture, neither knowing nor caring how to improve their condition, passing their time

in stupid indolence, with as little pretensions to reason or refinement as can well be desired, in short a very unphilosophical, improgressive, viscious, miserable set of barbarians as need be; now what difference would it make in the condition of these poor uninformed wretches, or how would it add to their vices, their ignorance, or 'squalid poverty,' if we suppose another island at a few leagues distance, of about the same circumference, maintaining nearly the same number of inhabitants living in the same manner? Yet as it is probable that these poor lousy wretches[1] leading a life of sloth and hunger, may upon the whole have more enjoyment than misery (for even the life of a savage seems better than no life at all, nay some have gone so far as to say that it was better than any other life) it would be desirable that there should be such another island so inhabited. But it is exactly the same thing whether we suppose twice the number of people inhabiting twice the extent of ground, or maintained on the same ground, being twice as much cultivated; population would not press the more on the means of subsistence, nor would the misery be greater, nor the checks required to prevent it greater. That is to say, an advance made in the state of cultivation

[1] I here follow the text of Mr. Malthus, who takes great pains to give a striking description of the savage tribes, as a pleasing contrast, no doubt, to the elegancies and comforts of polished life. Mr. Malthus's extreme sensibility to the grossness and inconveniences of the savage state, may be construed into refinement and delicacy. But it does not strike me so. There is something in this mis-placed and selfish fastidiousness, that shocks me more than the objects of it. It does not lead to compassion but to hatred. We strive to get rid of our uneasiness, by hardening ourselves towards the objects which occasion it, and lose the passive feelings of disgust excited in us by others in the active desire to inflict pain upon them. Aversion too easily changes into malice. Mr. Malthus seems fond of indulging this feeling against all those who have not the same advantages as himself. With a pious gratitude he seems fond of repeating to himself, 'I am not as this poor Hottentot.' He then gives you his bill of fare, which is none of the most delicate, without omitting a single article, and by shrugging up his shoulders, making wry mouths at him, and fairly turning your stomach, excites in you the same loathing and abhorrence of this poor creature that he takes delight in feeling himself. 'Your very nice people have the nastiest imaginations.' He triumphs over the calamities and degradation of his fellow-creatures. He lays open all the sores and blotches of humanity with the same calmness and alacrity as a hospital surgeon does those of a diseased body. He turns the world into a charnel-house. Through a dreary space of 300 'chill and comfortless' pages, he ransacks all quarters of the globe only 'to present a speaking picture of hunger and nakedness, in quest of objects best suited to his feelings, in anxious search of calamities most akin to his *invalid* imagination,' and eagerly gropes into every hole and corner of wretchedness to collect evidence in support of his grand misery-scheme, as at the time of an election, you see the city-candidates sneaking into the dirty alleys, and putrid cellars of Shoreditch or Whitechapel, and the candidates for Westminster into those of St. Giles's, canvassing for votes, their patriotic zeal prevailing over their sense of dignity, and sense of smell.

and in the arts of life so as to maintain double the population must always be the means of doubling the numbers and enjoyment of any people. The only possible difference would be that as this increased population would be the consequence of greater industry and knowledge, it would, one should think, denote of itself, that the people would be less liable to unforeseen accidents, and less likely to involve themselves in wilful distress than before. This is the first step in the progress of civilization and in the history of all nations. From this description of a barren island supporting a few wandering half-starved ignorant savages, such as England might have been once, let us turn our eyes to what England is now;—populous, enlightened, free, rich, powerful and happy; excelling equally in arts, and arms, the delight and terror of the rest of the world; the abode of science, the nurse of virtue, the darling seat of the muses; boasting her long line of heroes, and sages; her Bacon, her Newton, her Shakespear, her Milton, and her Locke;[1] blest with the most perfect government administered in the most perfect manner; having a king, lords, and commons, each balancing the other, and each in their several station and degree being security for every kind of liberty and every kind of property, harmoniously conspiring together for the good of the whole, taking care first of their own rights and interests as the most important, and then of those of others: subject to mild and equal laws, which afford the same immediate protection to every one in the enjoyment of his liberty and his property, whether that property is five thousand a year or no more than a shilling a day: maintaining in different degrees of comfort, and affluence, from the common necessaries to the highest luxuries of life, ten millions of souls, all supported by their own labour and industry or that of others; all plying close with cheerful and patient activity to some ingenious and useful handicraft, or some more severe but necessary labour, or else reclining in ease and elegance, and basking in the sunshine of life; her meanest beggar owing the rags which cover his nakedness, and the crust of bread which keeps his body and soul together to some of the most useful inventions which support, and to that humanity which is only to be found in civilized society. Shall we forget her schools, her colleges, her hospitals, her churches, her crowded cities, her streets lined with shops, enriched with the produce and manufactures of her own soil, or glittering with the spoils of a hundred nations, her thronged assemblies, her theatres, her balls, her operas, her 'palaces, her ladies and her pomp'; her villas, her parks, her cottages, her hamlets, her rich

[1] I mention these names because it is always customary to mention them in speaking on this subject: and there are some readers who are more impressed with a thing, the oftener it is repeated.

cultivated lands, teeming with plenty, her green valleys, her 'upland swells, echoing to the bleat of flocks,' her brave contented peasantry, their simple manners and honest integrity; and shall we wish to degrade this queen of nations, this mistress of the world once more into a horde of fierce barbarians, treading back our steps, and resigning this splendid profusion of all that can adorn and gladden human life, this gay variety, this happy union of all that is useful and all that is ornamental, the refinements of taste and decorations of fashion, the beautiful distinctions of artificial society, and the solid advantages derived from our constitution in church and state, for the groveling dispositions, the brutal ignorance, the disgusting poverty, the dried skins and miserable huts of the inhabitants of Terra del Fuego, or New Holland? Yet this it seems from the doctrine of Mr. Malthus is our only safe policy, since the lower we are in the scale of existence, the fewer and more miserable we are, the farther removed we must be from the tremendous evils of excessive population, which are the necessary consequences of the progress of refinement and civilization. But as the fact *so far* does not, as I suppose Mr. Malthus will himself allow, square with his theory, (for at no time during the progress of cultivation does the population appear to have been pressing with increased force on the means of subsistence, so that though the produce of the earth was increasing every year, the inhabitants were increasing much faster, every addition to the actual produce only occasioning some new addition to the swoln and bloated state of population, and aggravating the already dreadful symptoms of the disease) as I say the progress of cultivation and improvement of different kinds has not produced any of those fatal consequences we might be led to expect from it, so neither do I apprehend any of these fatal consequences in future from carrying it as much farther as it can go. I should just reverse the reasoning of Mr. Malthus, who taking the evil as at its greatest height when the world is supposed to be completely full and completely enlightened, thence argues downwards against all attempts at improvement as dangerous innovations; so I, finding that an improved cultivation and enlarged population are good things through the inferior gradations, am apt to think they would continue so, proceeding upwards to the topmost round of the ladder, as far as population is concerned, for I once more give full and fair warning that I engage in this question no farther, any loose, general or accidental expressions to the contrary notwithstanding. To make good Mr. Malthus's argument against population, we must suppose, as I have said before, that the tendency in population to increase goes on increasing with the thing itself: this would be true, if as our author supposes in his first edition, the passion always

required the same vent, in all circumstances, that is if we suppose man to be a mere headstrong animal in this respect, his reason having no influence whatever over his conduct, or which amounts to the same thing, that *actual* vice and misery (not foreseen, but felt) are the only checks to population. At this rate, it is evident that the degree of misery attending the gratification of the passion would have no effect to restrain it, all degrees being alike indifferent or that the quantity of actual misery incurred would be in proportion to the increased power of producing it. I shall examine these positions more at large in another letter ; I here wish to shew in a few words that as applied to the subject of increasing population, they lead to a direct absurdity. If we suppose this passion to be perfectly blind and insensible, to be deaf to all remonstrance, and regardless of all consequences, then no matter in what depths of misery it involves us, it will have its way, and go its own lengths. Take away the preventive check of *moral restraint* (which only comes in as a snivelling interpolation in some places of the second edition) and the population would no doubt go on doubling as fast as it could, not as fast as the means of subsistence would let it; that is, the excess of population would be great in proportion to the actual previous increase, or the excessive multiplication of the species would be the necessary consequence of, and commensurate with the power of excessive multiplication, which would depend on the number of persons having that power. Now this is contrary to all we know of facts and human nature, since in this case there could be no restraint to population at any time, but the extreme of vice or the extreme of misery. The power of population to increase is (we will grant) unlimited, but the tendency to increase is necessarily limited by its tendency to excess and limited by it in proportion to the excess. That is to say, it does not follow that though when there ought to be only two millions of inhabitants, there may be four, owing to the weakness of the above-mentioned principle of *moral restraint*, that therefore that four (by the tendency of population to increase in a geometrical ratio or to double itself,) will in like manner become eight, and so on, namely because the checks to it will increase in proportion ; or though the prospect of the inconveniences arising from doubling the population in the first instance, the quantity of food remaining the same, might not be sufficient to deter people, or overcome this propensity, yet the prospect of famine consequent upon the second doubling undoubtedly would, because their regard to consequences is supposed to remain the same, and the evils they have to dread in the one case are greater, and unless we suppose them to have become more stupid and brutal, must operate upon them more forcibly than in the other. The

strength of the passion itself may be considered as always the same, or a given quantity: but the motives to resist it arising from the consequences of its indulgence are not always the same, but may be either none at all, or very slight, or considerable, or extreme, as the obstacles to its indulgence may be either none at all, or a trifling inconvenience, or poverty, or absolute famine. Now the degree of excess in population, or the inconveniences to which we expose ourselves by inconsiderate gratification will depend entirely on the difference, be it more or less, between the strength of the passion in each individual, and the strength of moral restraint. If the latter principle is weak, it will require to be stimulated by the immediate apprehension of some very great inconvenience, before it will become a match for the importunity of physical desire. If it is strong, a general conviction of the propriety or prudence of self-denial will be sufficient to incline the balance. But in no case unless we suppose man to be degraded to the condition of the brutes, will this principle be so low and weak as to have no effect at all, so that no apprehension of the last degree of wretchedness, as the consequence, would take off or abate the edge of appetite. There is therefore always a point at which the excess ceases, and we have seen what this point at all times is. Thus if the operation of rational motives is so much upon a level with the physical impulse, as to keep population exactly or nearly down to the means of subsistence, it will do so equally whether that population is actually greater or less, whether it is stationary or progressive, for it will increase only with the means by which it is supported. On the other hand if from the manners, the habits, and institutions of society, there is a considerable tendency in population to excess, this tendency to excess will not be greater or less in proportion to the actual number of inhabitants, or the actual quantity of food, nor will it depend on their being progressive or stationary, but on the morals of the people being retrograde, progressive, or stationary; for the tendency of population itself to excess or to *increase* excessively (a dubious kind of expression) is not a perpetual, indefinite, invariable tendency to increase from 2 to 4, from 4 to 8, &c. (as I have just shewn) but a tendency to increase *beyond* the means of subsistence to a certain point or degree. This tendency to excess will consequently be the same wherever we fix the point of subsistence, because it is only a given tendency to outstrip that limit whether nearer or farther off, whether advancing or retreating.[1] It is true there is a tendency in population in this case to increase *faster*

[1] I here leave out of the question, as not essential to it, the effect of sudden rises or falls, and other accidental variations in the produce of a country which cannot be foreseen or provided against, on the state of population.

than the means of subsistence, but not to increase *faster and faster*, or to get more and more a-head of it. It is in fact only a disproportionate superiority in certain motives over others, which subjects the community or certain classes of it to a great degree of want and hardship: and as far as their imprudence and folly will carry them, they will go, but they will not go farther. They will submit to be *pinched*, but not to be *starved*, unless this consequence may sometimes be supposed to follow from the partial and unnatural debasement of certain classes of the community, by driving them to despair and rendering them callous to suffering. But the general tendency in population to become excessive can only be increased by the increased relaxation of moral restraint, or by gradually weakening the motives of prudence, reason, &c. I cannot make this matter plainer.

Mr. Malthus has not I conceive given this question of increasing population and practical improvement fair play. He has contrived to cover over its real face and genuine features with the terrible mask of modern philosophy. His readers having been prevailed upon to give up the fee-simple of their understandings into his hands, that no undue advantages might be taken of them by the *perfectibility* school, they find it difficult to get it back out of his hands, though they want it to go on again (the alarm being over) in the old road of common sense, practical improvement, and liberal discussion. He had persuaded himself that population was such an enormous evil in connection with a scheme of unlimited improvement, that he can hardly reconcile himself to it, or tell whether to think it a good or an evil in any shape, or according to any scheme. By indulging his prejudices, he has so confounded his perceptions, that he cannot judge rightly, even when he wishes to do it. He found it most convenient, when he had to confute Mr. Godwin, to describe reason as a principle of no practical value whatever, as a mere negation. As therefore by the removal of vice and misery the office of checking population would devolve upon this principle, which could do nothing, population would in fact have no check left to it, and then certainly the most terrible consequences would ensue. The only question would be, how soon we should begin cutting one another's throats, or how many (whether a greater or a smaller number) had better be employed on this kind of work. We perceive very plainly that this must be the inevitable consequence of increased population, if it can only be kept down by the positive checks of vice and misery. We apply the theory very clearly to a future stage of the progress; but though, if the theory were true, exactly the same scenes ought to be acting before our eyes at present on a smaller scale, yet as we find that this is not the case, we leave this circumstance out of the question, and conclude that there must

be some secret difference, some occult cause, something we cannot very well explain, which makes the present state of things preferable to all others: at least whatever might be the consequences of population, if certain alterations and improvements were to take place, we are sure that it produces no such consequences at present. With respect to the lower, or actual stages of population and improvement, Mr. Malthus supposes the *preventive* checks to operate as well as the *positive*, the fear of misery as well as the misery itself, because we know that it does: but whenever you suppose any alteration or improvement to take place in the world, so that you have not the fact to confront him with, he immediately assumes the positive checks, or actual vice and misery, as the only checks to population; herein trusting to his theory. Whenever you are found to be advancing in the scale (which must be indeed from some of the restraints being taken off) he directly supposes that you are to be set free from all restraints whatever. He lets loose his ratios upon you, and away they go like a clock running down. This indeed would not be so well. Mr. Malthus thus artfully makes the question of progressive improvement to be, whether we are to be governed as now by mixed motives, or to be released from all moral restraint, for he supposes that if population once passes a certain bourne, which he points out to you, it will then become perfectly untractable, all its future excesses will be prevented only by actual vice and misery. Thus though all the good of our present situation, all wherein it differs from a state of brutal violence or lingering want, is in fact owing to the prevalence of a less degree of reason and foresight, yet that if that principle were strengthened, and the consequence were an increase of population, and a more general diffusion of the comforts of life, this principle would then be of no avail in preventing or correcting the excesses to which the unrestrained indulgence of our appetites would give rise. There is a degree of absurdity, which staggers belief and almost challenges our conviction, by making it incredible that if we ourselves do not labour under some strong deception, the human understanding should be capable of such extreme folly.

I shall conclude this letter by laying down two or three general maxims, which appear to me to follow clearly from the view which has been here taken of the subject.

First, while population goes on increasing at that tremendous rate described by Mr. Malthus, it shews that there is nothing to restrain it; that there is no need of any thing to restrain it: that it is wanted, that its increase is a thing to be desired, not to be dreaded, and that if it were possible for it to increase ten times faster, it would be so much the better.

Secondly, when it arrives at a certain point, that is, where the population begins to press on the means of subsistence, either from natural or artificial causes, or when it threatens to become an evil from excess, it naturally stops short of its own accord, the checks to it from vice, misery and moral restraint taken all together becoming stronger as the excess becomes greater. It therefore produces it's own antidote and produces it in quantities exactly in proportion to it's own extent. It is not therefore (as Mr. Malthus would, when he pleases, have us believe) like a stone hanging suspended over a precipice, which if it once loses its balance will be hurled furiously down, rolling and bounding from steep to steep with increased velocity till it reaches the bottom, but like a balance suspended by a check-weight, where you cannot increase the pressure on one side without increasing the resistance proportionably on the other. It may therefore at worst be left very safely to itself, instead of being considered as an evil against whose unforeseen ravages no precautions are sufficient.

Thirdly, as the same quantity of vice and misery co-operating with the same degree of moral restraint, will always keep population at the same (relative) point, so a less degree of actual vice and misery operating on a greater degree of moral restraint, that is, of reason, prudence, virtue, &c. will produce the same effect: and we may always judge of the happiness of a people, and of the beneficial effects of population by the prevalence of moral restraint over vice and misery, instead of supposing that vice and misery are the best pledges of the happiness of a state, and the only possible security against excessive population. Consequently, the object of the philosopher must be to increase the influence of rational motives, and lessen the actual operation of vice and misery. It is only in proportion as he does this, that he does any thing; for not only are vice and misery such cheap commodities that they may be had at any corner merely with asking for (any bungler may contract for them in the gross) but farther though they undoubtedly operate as checks to population, I must be excused from admitting that they *remedy* the evils of population, unless the disease can be considered as its own remedy, for in the degree in which they generally exist, they are the only evils, that are ever likely to rise from it, and as to those imaginary, unknown and unheard of evils, with which Mr. Malthus is perpetually threatening us in order to reconcile us to those we bear, I deny the possibility of their existence upon any known principles of human society, either in its improved, or unimproved state.

I do not mean to say that there is any thing in the general principles here stated that Mr. Malthus is at present disposed to deny, or that he has not himself expressly insisted on in some part

or other of his *various* work; it is enough for my purpose that there are other parts of his work in which he has contradicted them and himself, and that the uniform tenor of his first work leans directly the opposite way; and it is not my business so much to inquire, how much Mr. Malthus retains of his old philosophy, as how many of their old feelings his readers retain on the subject, on which he will be able to build as many false conclusions as he pleases, and with more safety to himself, than if he still persevered in the direct and unqualified assertion of exploded error. Plain, downright consistent falsehood is not dangerous: it is only that spurious mixture of truth and falsehood, that perpetual oscillation between the two extremes, that wavering and uncertainty that baffles detection by rendering it difficult to know on what ground you are to meet your adversary, that makes the sophist so formidable as he is. In order therefore that Mr. Malthus may not avail himself of his inconsistencies, I shall assume a right to contradict him as often as he contradicts himself, and to consider the peculiar doctrines of his work as its essential and only important doctrines.

LETTER V

WHETHER VICE AND MISERY ARE THE NECESSARY CONSEQUENCES OF, AND THE ONLY CHECKS TO, THE PRINCIPLE OF POPULATION

Sir—I have in my last letter taken more pains than, I believe, was necessary to shew that the tendency of population to increase is not a *dangerous* one; or at any rate that the actual increase of population does not increase the danger. The same proportionable quantity of vice and misery would always be *sufficient* to keep down the excess of population beyond the means of subsistence, whether we suppose those means to be great or small: there is another question, whether the same quantity of vice and misery is always *necessary* for this purpose; and further, whether all the vice and misery in the world are not only necessary checks to, but the immediate effects of, the principle of population, and of nothing else.

Before I proceed, I must stop to observe that I have just been perusing the corrections, additions, &c. to the third and *last* edition of the Essay; and I confess I have not much heart to go on. The pen falls from my hand. For to what purpose is it to answer a man, who has answered himself, who has hardly advanced an opinion that

he has not retracted, who after all your pains to overturn the extravagant assertions he had brought forward, comes and tells you, Why I have given them up myself; so that you hardly know whether to look upon him in the light of an adversary or an ally. I do not like this shadow-fighting, any more than Sancho liked his master's fighting with enchanters. When Don Quixote had to encounter the knight of the Prodigious Nose, his valour was inflamed, and he rushed fiercely on his antagonist, but when after having unhorsed him, he found that it was his old friend and neighbour the Batchelor Carrasco, the fury of his arm was suspended, and he knew not what to say or do.[1] Till Mr. Malthus lays aside his harlequin's coat and sword, and ceases to chase opinions through a rapid succession of varying editions, it is not an easy matter to come up with him or give him fair battle. It was thought a work of no small labour and ingenuity to make a harmony of the Evangelists. I would recommend it to some one (who thinks himself equal to the task) to make a harmony of Mr. Malthus's different performances. Till this is done, it seems impossible to collect the sense of his writings, and consequently to answer them. It should not therefore be the object of any one who would set himself to answer Mr. Malthus, so much to say that such and such are the real and settled opinions of that author, as that such opinions are floating in different parts of his writings, that they are floating or fixed in the minds of his readers, and that those opinions are not so correct as they might be. If Mr. Malthus had chosen to disclaim certain opinions with their consequences, advanced in the first edition, instead of denying that he ever held such opinions, though he may still be detected with the *manner*, he would have saved me the trouble of writing, and himself the disagreeable task of reading, this *rude* attack upon them.

Mr. Malthus lays down as the basis of all his reasonings the two following positions, viz. 'First, that food is necessary to the existence of man.'

'Secondly, That the passion between the sexes is necessary, and will remain nearly in its present state.'

'These two laws,' he adds, 'ever since we have had any knowledge of mankind, appear to have been fixed laws of our nature; and as we have not hitherto seen any alteration in them, we have no right to conclude that they will ever cease to be what they are now, without an immediate act of power in that Being who first arranged the system of the universe. The best arguments for the perfectibility of man are drawn from a contemplation of the great progress that he

[1] I find there is here some transposition of names and circumstances, but it does not much matter.

has already made from the savage state, and the difficulty of saying where he is to stop. But towards the extinction of the passion between the sexes, no progress whatever has hitherto been made. It appears to exist in as much force at present as it did two thousand, or four thousand years ago. There are individual exceptions now as there always have been. But, as these exceptions do not appear to increase in number, it would surely be a very unphilosophical mode of arguing to infer merely from the existence of an exception, that the exception would in time become the rule, and the rule the exception.'

As to the first position here laid down that food is necessary to the existence of man, I shall not certainly dispute it. As to the second kind of necessity, the gratification of the passion between the sexes, I must beg leave to deny that this necessity is 'like unto the first' or to be compared with it. Does Mr. Malthus really mean to say that a man can no more abstain from the commerce of women, than he can live without food? If so, he states what is not the fact. Does he mean to assert, that the impulse to propagate the species, call it lust, or love, is a principle as strong, as ungovernable, as importunate, as uniform in its effects, as incapable of being subjected to the control of reason, or circumstances, in short as much an affair of mere physical appetite, as hunger? One would suppose so, for he makes no distinction between them, but speaks of them both in the same terms, as equally *necessary*, as equally fixed, and immutable laws of our nature, the operation of which nothing short of a miracle can suspend or alter. There are two circumstances, the mentioning of which will however be sufficient to shew that the two kinds of necessity here spoken of are not of the same order, or cogency, and cannot be reasoned upon in the same manner, namely, that there are many instances of persons who have lived all their lives without any intercourse with the other sex, whereas there is no instance of any person living without food; in the second place, what makes a most marked distinction between the two cases, is that the longer we have been accustomed to do without the indulgence of the one appetite, the more tractable we find it, whereas the craving occasioned by the want of food, the longer it continues, becomes more and more pressing, and at last utterly ungovernable, and if not satisfied in time, is sure in all cases whatever, without a single exception, to destroy the person's life. These two considerations are of themselves quite sufficient to overturn the analogy which is here pretended to be set up between love and hunger (a delicate comparison)—to shew that the first of these impulses is not an affair of mere physical necessity, that it does not operate always in the same way, and that it is not

a thing, over which reason, or circumstances have no power. What can be a stronger instance of the power of reason, or imagination, or habit over this principle than the number of single women, who in every country, till the manners become quite corrupt, preserve either through their whole lives, or the best part of them the greatest purity and propriety of conduct? One would think that female modesty had been a flower that blossomed only in other climes (instead of being the peculiar growth of our own time and country!) that Mr. Malthus in the heat of his argument, and urged on by the ardour of his own feelings, is blind to the example of so many of his fair countrywomen, in whom the influence of a virtuous education, of virtuous principles, and virtuous dispositions prevails over the warmth of the passions and force of temptation. Mr. Malthus's doctrine is a most severe satire against the modesty and self-denial of the other sex, and ruins in one sweeping clause the unblemished reputations of all those expecting or desponding virgins who had hitherto been supposed to live in the daily, hourly practice of this virtue. Trenched as he is behind history, philosophy, and a knowledge of human nature, he laughs at all their prudery and affectation, and tells them fairly that the thing is impossible; and that unless a miracle could be worked in their favour, they might as well pretend to live without eating or drinking, or sleeping, as without the men. He must be of opinion with Iago, that 'their greatest merit is not to leave it undone but keep it unknown.' Surely, *no maid could live near such a man.*—Though this is what Mr. Malthus *might* say, it is not what he *does* say: on the other hand, when he comes to particulars, (as he is rather a candid man, and does not trouble himself much about consistency) instead of representing real chastity as a kind of miracle or monster in nature, he represents it as a very common thing and bears honourable testimony to the virtue of most women, particularly in the middle and higher ranks of life, in this respect. But then this virtue is confined entirely to the women; the men neither do, nor ever will be able to practise it; and this again salves the objection to his argument. But this is of all others the strongest proof of the futility of Mr. Malthus's reasoning: for to what is this difference owing but to the opinion of the world respecting their conduct, that is, to moral causes? It cannot be said I presume that the greater command which the other sex have over themselves is because their heads are stronger and their passions weaker, (this would, I am sure, be out of all anatomical proportion): it is owing solely to the institutions of society, imposing this restraint upon them; though these institutions, if we are to believe Mr. Malthus, can never in any circumstances whatever have any

effect on this passion. It is impossible to add any thing to the force and conclusiveness of this argument by enlarging upon it: it speaks for itself. I can only say, that I am willing to rest the whole controversy on this single fact. If the passion is thus capable of being modified and influenced by circumstances, opinion, and manners, and not merely slightly modified, or for a short time, in one or two solitary instances, as an exception to the general rule (though even this would shew that the necessity is not absolute, invincible, fatal) but actually kept under (as far as it has any thing to do with population, or child-bearing) by one half the sex in every well-regulated community, I conceive Mr. Malthus can only be justified in saying, that no possible circumstances will ever render this passion entirely subject to the control of reason, by saying that no circumstances will ever arrive in which it would be the imperious and indispensable duty of every one to habituate himself to such restraint, in which that necessity would be generally felt and understood and enforced by the opinion of the whole community, and in which nothing but a general system of manners formed upon that opinion could save the community from ruin, or from the evils of excessive population, which is point-blank contrary to Mr. Malthus's whole doctrine. In short, Mr. Malthus's whole book rests on a malicious supposition, that all mankind (I hope the reader will pardon the grossness of the expression, the subject is a gross one) are like so many animals *in season*. 'Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys, as salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross as ignorance made drunk,' matters could then be no worse than he represents them. Population could then only be checked by vice and misery and by nothing else. But I hope things are not quite so bad.[1] Mr. Malthus says, 'that the passion between the sexes is necessary, or at least that it will remain nearly in its present state.' To this I might perhaps assent, if I knew what 'its present state' is. Does Mr. Malthus mean by its present state its present state in England or in Scotland, or in Italy, or in Asia, or in Africa, or America, for in all or most of these places is its present state a very different thing from what it is in the rest of them? One would imagine from the easy complacency with which Mr. Malthus treats the subject, that the present state of this passion was a something really given, a fixed quantity, a general rule like the relation between two and two and four, or *between food and*

[1] I am happy to find that a philosophical work, like Mr. Malthus's, has got a good deal into the hands of young ladies of a liberal education and an inquisitive turn of mind. The question is no doubt highly interesting; and the author has thrown over it a warmth of colouring, that can hardly fail to please. Even Miss Howe was fond of ardours.

the human stomach,[1] that it was indulged universally and equally in all countries, instead of being as various in itself and its effects as climate and all other causes, natural and artificial, can make it.—Thus to give an example as much in point as can be, is the present state of this passion, *i.e.* of the indulgence of it, the same in Lancashire, that it is in Westmoreland, the very next county to it? In the one you find the most profligate manners, and the most extreme licentiousness, in the other there is hardly any such thing. Mr. Malthus often says, he will never dispute any thing that is proved by experience and a real observation of human life. Now I conceive that the observation which I have just stated is a *fact*. Yet Mr. Malthus seems to have been quite insensible to this, and many other facts of the same kind. But the truth is, that your practical reasoners, your matter-of-fact men are the dullest of all mortals. They are like justices of the peace who are bound to receive no evidence unless it is given in upon oath, and who without descending from the bench and forfeiting the dignity of their pretensions cannot attend to any of those general surmises, those obvious sources of information or casual impressions, by which other people arrive at common sense, and human feelings.—They shut their eyes to the general face of nature, and trying to grope their way by the help of facts as they call them, wander like blind men from *pillar to post*, without either guide or object, and are lost in a labyrinth of dates, names, capital letters, numeros, official documents, authenticated copies of lying affidavits, curious records that are nothing to the purpose, registers of births, deaths, marriages, and christenings, voyages and travels.—Mr. Malthus may perhaps mean, when he says that 'the sexual passion will remain nearly in its present state,' that it will remain in the same state in each country. To this I should also assent, if I could agree with him, 'that ever since we have had any knowledge of mankind, the passion of which we are speaking, appears to have been a fixed law of our nature, and that as we have not hitherto seen any alteration in it, we have no right to conclude that there will ever be any.' If Mr. Malthus in this passage meant to confine him to the passion or impulse itself, I should not certainly be at much pains to contradict him. But that is not the question. The question relates solely to the irregular indulgence of, or the degree of restraint imposed on the passion; and

[1] I have here purposely left an opening for Mr. Malthus's ingenuity. He will I hope take the hint and write another quarto volume to prove by anatomical and medical inquiries into the state of all countries, beginning at the north and ending at the south pole, that there is the same variation in the quantity and kind of food required by the human stomach in different climates and countries, as there is in the quantity of sexual indulgence.

in this respect his assertion is evidently false. The difference in the state of manners in the same country at different periods is as striking and notorious as that between the manners of different countries. There is as much difference between what England was in this respect a hundred and sixty years ago, and what she is now, as there is between England and Italy at the present day. Was there no difference between the manners of ancient Rome in the early periods of her history, and towards the decline of the empire? May not the state of manners in Italy under the republic, under the emperors, and under the popes, be distinctly traced to the influence of religious or political institutions, or to other causes, besides the state of population, or the facility of gratifying the abstract instinctive propensity to sexual indulgence? Was there not a striking difference between the severity and restraint which was required and undoubtedly practised under Charles I. and in the time of the Puritans, and that torrent of dissipation and undisguised profligacy which burst upon the kingdom after the restoration of Charles II.? This sudden transition from demure and saint-like or hypocritical austerity to open shameless licentiousness cannot assuredly be accounted for from the increasing pressure of population. Nor can it be pretended to have been owing to this principle that the tide afterwards turned again at the Revolution with the habits and fashions of the court, and with the views and maxims of that party who had now got the ascendancy. A learned writer might easily fill a volume with instances to the same purpose. But the few which are here skimmed from the mere surface of history, and which must be familiar to every one, are sufficient to disprove Mr. Malthus's assertion, not as a metaphysical refinement, but as a practical rule, that the passion between the sexes and the effects of that passion have remained always the same. The indulgence of that passion is so far from being a law antecedent to all other laws, and paramount to all other considerations, that it is in a manner governed almost entirely by circumstances, and may be said to be the creature of the imagination. But Mr. Malthus says, that no regular or gradual progress has hitherto been made towards the extinction of this passion, and that it exists in as much force at present, as it did two thousand, or four thousand years ago. The question is whether this passion is fixed and stationary, always remaining at the same point, controuling circumstances, but not controuled by them, not whether the change of circumstances and lapse of time may not bring it back to the same point again. I think it probable that if Mr. Malthus had to preach a sermon on the truth and excellence of revealed religion, he would be inclined to take for one of his topics the benefit we have derived from it in the govern-

ment of our passions, and general purity of our manners. He might launch out into a description shewing how the contemplation of heavenly things weans the affections from the things of the world, and mortifies our carnal desires, how a belief in future rewards and punishments strengthens our resolution, and is indeed the only thing that can render us proof against every species of temptation; he might enlarge on the general purity and elevation which breathes through the sacred writings, on the law confining the institution of marriage to pairs; he might dwell on the grossness and pernicious tendency of the Pagan mythology; he might glance at the epistle to the Romans, or the preamble to the Jewish laws, and finding that the practices there described are not common among *us*, without travelling to Rome, or inquiring into the present state of Chaldæa, conclude by felicitating his hearers on the striking contrast between ancient and modern manners, and on the gradual improvement of morals and refinement of sentiment produced by the promulgation of christianity. Though we in general reason very incorrectly in comparing ancient and modern manners, (for we always confound the former with eastern, and the latter with our own manners) I am apt to think that some change has taken place in this passion in the course of time. It seems to be more modified by other feelings than it used to be; it is less a boiling of the blood, an animal heat, a headlong, brutal impulse than it was in past ages. The principle is somewhat taken down and weakened, the appetite is not so strong, we can stay our stomachs better than we used to do, we do not gorge indiscriminately on every kind of food without taste or decency. The vices of the moderns are more artificial than constitutional. They do not arise so much from instinct as from a depraved will. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. We stimulate ourselves into affected passion: we are laborious imitators of folly, and ape the vices of others in cold blood. But whatever may be the result of an inquiry into the comparative state of ancient and modern manners, I cannot allow that it has any thing to do with the present question. I will allow that the progress of refinement and knowledge has in ninety-nine instances out of a hundred tended to deprave instead of improving the morals of men, that at the same time that it has taken away the gross impulse, it has introduced an artificial and studied depravity, the operation of which is more subtle, dangerous and universal; in short that nations as they grow older like individuals grow worse, not from constitution, but habit. Still this fact if granted (and I am afraid it is too near the truth) will not at all prove Mr. Malthus's theory, that this passion remains always the same, being influenced neither by time nor circumstances. Secondly,

it will not overturn the speculations respecting the possibility of making an entire change in the passion 'in a state of society altogether different from any that has hitherto existed,' but will on the contrary render such a change more desirable and necessary, as our only resource against the general contagion of vice and profligacy. If this vice is found to spread gradually wider and wider, clinging to the support of institutions, which in all other respects favour selfishness and sensuality, if it is not the only one among the vices, which, while all others spread and flourish and are fostered in the eye of the world, does not hide its diminished head, this is not to be wondered at. But it would be a singular way of defending the present institutions of society, that from all our past experience we find that their progress has been attended with the gradual corruption of manners, and has uniformly ended in an utter debasement of character and the relaxation of every moral tie; and it would be a strange kind of inference to say that no alteration in the circumstances or institutions of society would ever make men different from what they are, because as long as those circumstances and institutions have been known to exist, mankind have remained always the same, or have been growing worse instead of better. Mr. Malthus denies that Mr. Godwin has any right to conclude that because population has not produced the dreadful effects he ascribes to it in any known state of society, it would not therefore produce them in a state of society quite different from any other; and in the same manner I should deny that Mr. Malthus has any right to infer because the progress of the human mind has not in the past history of the world been productive of any very beneficial consequences, that it will never be productive of any such consequences under very different circumstances. Knowledge, as I have shewn in a former letter, is not a necessary, absolute good: neither is it a necessary evil. Its utility depends on the direction which is given to it by other things; e.g. in Scotland, the case before alluded to, knowledge does not seem to be the enemy of sobriety and good manners, but a support to them. The decay in the purity and simplicity of Scotch manners, whenever it arrives, will not I dare say be owing to the increase of knowledge, but to the spread of luxury, or other external causes. When the whole mass is tainted, it cannot be expected that knowledge should escape the infection. All therefore that the advocates for the future progressive improvement of mankind have to prove in order to make out a consistent case, is that the state of the passion between the sexes depends not upon physical, but moral causes; that where these latter causes have been favourable to severity of manners, and the elevation of the character, these effects have

uniformly flowed from them, and may be seen not in one or two singular exceptions, but in large classes of people, in the prevailing manners of whole ages and nations. Thus we do not merely know that Scipio was chaste, and Nero profligate, but we know that there was nothing singular in the chastity of the one, or the profligacy of the other; it was little more than the emanation of the character and circumstances of the times in which they lived. The leaders of the republican party in the time of Cromwell, such men as Milton, Hampden, Pym, Marvel, Sydney, were not I believe in the command over their passions exactly on a level with the young courtiers in the following reign: but though the names of these men stand out and ever will stand out in history, giving dignity to our nature in all its parts, yet it is not to be supposed that they alone drank of the pure waters of faith and reason, which flowed freely at that time; but that the same lofty thoughts, the same common exertions, and the same passions, growing out of the circumstances of the times, must have imparted a sort of severe and high-toned morality to men's minds in general, influencing the national character in a very different way from the foreign fopperies and foreign vices, from the train of strumpets, buffoons, fiddlers, and obscene rhymers let loose upon the people in the succeeding reign. It is not necessary to prove that manners have always changed for the better, but that they have always changed for the better, as far as those general causes have operated in part, from the complete success of which a total change is predicted. This passion as it runs into licentiousness is certainly one great obstacle in the way of improvement, and one of those passions which we must conquer before we can hope to become perfectly reasonable beings (if this is a thing either desirable or possible). But to say, that we may get a complete mastery over our passions, and that we shall still be in danger from the principle of population is to me a paradox. Population is only dangerous from the excess of this passion, and I see no reason why its excesses may not be restrained as well as those of any other passion. We find by uniform experience that it is, like other passions, influenced by example, institution, and circumstances, according to the degree of strength they have; and if there is reason to suppose it possible that any of the other passions should ever be totally eradicated, or subjected to moral restraint, there is no reason why this should not be so too. It does not form any anomaly to the other prevailing passions of men. It is not, like hunger, a necessary instinct. Its effects are more like those of drunkenness: and we might as well make this latter vice an insurmountable objection to the good order and happiness of society, by saying that there will always be as

many drunken disputes, brawls and riots, as there are at present, because there are as many instances of people getting drunk now as there were two thousand years ago, as pretend to deduce the same consequence from the existence of such a passion as lust.—To judge from his book, I should suppose Mr. Malthus to be a man of a warm constitution, and amorous complexion. I should not hesitate in my own mind, to conclude that this is 'the sin that most easily besets him.' I can easily imagine that he has a sufficient command over himself, in all other respects. I can believe that he is quite free from the passions of anger, pride, avarice, sloth, drunkenness, envy, revenge, and all those other passions which create so much disturbance in the world. He seems never to have heard of, or never to have felt them; for he passes them over as trifles beneath the notice of a philosopher. But the women are *the devil.*—The delights and torments of love no man, he tells us, ever was proof against: there all our philosophy is useless; and reason but an empty name. 'The rich golden shaft hath killed the flock of all affections else,' and here only he is vulnerable. The smiles of a fair lady are to him irresistible; the glimpse of a petticoat throws him into a flame; and all his senses are up in arms, and his heart fails within him, at the very name of love. His gallantry and devotion to the fair sex know no bounds; and he not only answers for himself, but undertakes to prove that all men are made of the same combustible materials. His book reminds one of the title of the old play, 'All for love, or the world well lost.' If Mr. M.'s passions are too much for him, (though I should not have the worse opinion of him on this account) I would advise him to give vent to them in writing love-songs; not in treatises of philosophy. I am aware, however, that it is dangerous to meddle in such matters. As long as Mr. Malthus gravely reduces the strength of the passion to a mathematical certainty, he is sure to have the women on his side; while I, for having the presumption to contradict his amorous conclusions, shall be looked upon as a sour old batchelor, and convicted of rebellion against the omnipotence of love.

But to return. It is the direct object of Mr. Malthus's philosophy to draw our attention from the slight and superficial influence which human institutions have had on the happiness of man, to those 'deeper-seated' causes of misery which arise out of the principle of population. These, he says, are by far the most important, and the only ones worth our attending to, because they are the only ones on which all our reasonings and all our exertions will have no effect. He very roundly taxes Mr. Godwin and others as men who talked about what they did not understand, because they did not perceive that social institutions, and the different forms of government, and all

the other means in our power of affecting the condition of human life are 'but as the dust in the balance,' compared with a principle entirely out of our power, which renders the vices of those institutions necessary, and any essential improvement in them hopeless. He is also angry with Hume for saying something about 'indolence.' We are in no case to look beyond the principle of population, in accounting for the state of man in society, if we would not fall under Mr. Malthus's displeasure, but are to resolve every thing into that. In his hands, population is the Aaron's rod which swallowed up all the other rods. The piety of some of the old divines led them to see all things in God. Mr. Malthus's self-complacency leads him to see all things in the Essay. He would persuade us that his discovery supersedes all other discoveries; that it is the category of political science; that all other causes of human happiness and misery are merged and sunk in that one, to which alone they owe their influence, and their birth. So that we are in fact to consider all human institutions, good, bad, and indifferent, all folly, vice, wisdom, virtue, knowledge, ignorance, liberty and slavery, poverty and riches, monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, polygamy, celibacy, all forms and modes of life, all arts, manufactures, and science, as resulting mechanically from this one principle; which though simple in itself, yet in its effects is a jumble, a chaos of contradictions, a mass of inconsistency and absurdity, which no human understanding can unravel, or explain. Over this crew and medley of opinions, Mr. Malthus 'sits umpire, and by decision more embroils the fray by which he reigns': for he is not quite undetermined in his choice between good and evil, but is always inclined to give the preference to vice and misery, not only as the most natural, but as the most safe and salutary effects of this principle, as we prescribe a low diet and blisters to persons of too full a temperament. 'Our greatest good is but plethoric ill.'—Mr. Malthus may perhaps plead in his own defence that at the outset of his work (second edition) he professes to treat only of *one* of the causes which have hitherto impeded the progress of virtue and happiness, and that he was not therefore, by the terms of the agreement, bound to take cognizance of any of the other causes which have tended to produce the same effect. He is like a man who takes it into his head to make a huge map of Scotland, (larger than any that ever was made of the whole world besides) and gives you into the bargain as much or as little of Ireland or the rest of Great Britain as he pleases. Any one else who chuses, may make a map of England or Ireland on the same scale. There is something fair and plausible in this. But the fact really is, that Mr. Malthus will let nobody make a map of the

country but himself: he has put England, Wales, and Ireland in the three corners of his great map (for the title takes up one of the corners) and he insists upon it that this is quite sufficient.—What he aims at in all his plans and calculations of existing grievances is to magnify the evils of population, to exonerate human institutions, and to throw the whole blame on nature herself. I shall therefore try to give such a sketch, or bird's-eye view of the subject as may serve to shew the unfairness of our author's statement. How little he has confined himself to his professed object, and how little he can be considered in the light of a joint-inquirer after truth, will be seen by quoting the following passages at large.

'The great error under which Mr. Godwin labours throughout his whole work is, the attributing of almost all the vices and misery that prevail in civil society to human institutions. Political regulations, and the established administration of property are with him the fruitful sources of all evil, the hotbeds of all the crimes that degrade mankind. Were this really a true state of the case, it would not seem an absolutely hopeless task to remove evil completely from the world; and reason seems the proper and adequate instrument for effecting so great a purpose. But the truth is, that though human institutions *appear* to be the obvious and obtrusive causes of much mischief to mankind, they are, in reality, light and superficial, in comparison with those deeper-seated causes of evil which result from the laws of nature.'

Now by 'the laws of nature,' of which human institutions are here made only a sort of *cat's-paw*, our author means neither more nor less than the principle of population. For after supposing in compliment to Mr. Godwin, a state of society in which the spirit of oppression, the spirit of servility, and the spirit of fraud, in which envy, malice, and revenge, in which every species of narrowness and selfishness are banished from the world, where war and contention have ceased to exist, where unwholesome trades and manufactures are no longer encouraged, &c., he breaks out into his usual cant of, 'I cannot conceive a form of society so favourable upon the whole to population.' He then proceeds gravely to shew, by a train of reasoning which has been already recapitulated, and which need not surely be refuted twice, how in such a state of happy equality population would go on increasing without limit, because all obstacles to it, 'all anxiety about the future support of children,' would be entirely removed, though it would at the same time be attended in every stage of the progress with increasing and aggravated wretchedness, because those very obstacles, and the same difficulty of providing for the support of children would still remain.

'Here then,' he says, 'no human institutions existed, to the perverseness of which Mr. Godwin ascribes the original sin of the worst men. No opposition had been produced by them between public and private good. No monopoly had been created of those advantages which reason directs to be left in common. No man had been goaded to the breach of order by unjust laws. Benevolence had established her reign in all hearts. And yet in so short a period as fifty years, violence, oppression, falsehood, misery, every hateful vice, and every form of distress, which degrade and sadden the present state of society, seem to have been generated by the most imperious circumstances, by laws inherent in the nature of man, and absolutely independent of all human regulations.'

'It is a perfectly just observation of Mr. Godwin, that *there is a principle in human society by which population is perpetually kept down to the level of the means of subsistence.* The sole question is, what is this principle? Is it some obscure and occult cause? Is it some mysterious interference of heaven, which at a certain period strikes the men with impotence, and the women with barrenness? Or is it a cause open to our researches, within our view; a cause which has constantly been observed to operate, though with varied force, in every state in which man has been placed? Is it not misery and the fear of misery,' [certainly two very different things] 'the necessary and inevitable results of the laws of nature, which human institutions, so far from aggravating, have tended considerably to mitigate, though they can never remove?' He then proceeds to shew how the distinctions of property and the other regulations of society would necessarily result from the principle of population, and adds, that 'certainly if the great principle of the Essay be admitted, it affects Mr. Godwin's whole work, and essentially alters the foundations of political justice. A great part of his book consists of an *abuse* of human institutions' [very sad indeed] 'as productive of all or most of the evils which afflict society. The acknowledgement of a new and totally unconsidered cause of misery must evidently alter the state of these arguments,' [comfortable again] 'and make it absolutely necessary that they should be either newly modified, or *entirely rejected.*'—How fortunate to have discovered that the evils in society are not owing to a cause which might be remedied, but to one that renders their removal absolutely hopeless!

I might here, if I were to follow the impulse of my own levity, say that the yellow fever has I believe made its appearance since the first edition of Political Justice, though I do not know that this circumstance would make it necessary entirely to new-model the arguments. As to Mr. Malthus's 'new and unconsidered cause of

misery,' I deny that the necessity of providing a proportionable quantity of food for an increase of people was new or unconsidered. All that Mr. Malthus has discovered is that the population would go on increasing, though there was nothing to support it!—Our author has chosen to justify or palliate the real disorders which prevail in society by supposing a case of fictitious distress; by which means he proves incontestably that the present vices and defects of political institutions, &c. are *comparative* blessings. He supposes that in a state of society where the public good was the constant guide of action, men would entirely lay aside the use of their reason, and think of nothing but begetting children, without considering in the least how they were to be maintained. Now I will also for a time take a license from common sense, and make a supposition as wise as Mr. Malthus's. I will suppose all the inhabitants of this town to come to a determination to live without eating, and do nothing but drink gin. What would be the consequence? Perpetual intoxication, quarrels, the fierceness of hunger, disease, idleness, filth, nakedness, maudlin misery, sallow faces, sights of famine and despair, meagre skeletons, the dying, and the dead. But why need I attempt to described what has been already so much better described by Hogarth? Here then, I might exclaim, no human institutions existed, no unjust laws, no excessive labour, no unwholesome trades, no inequality, no malice, envy, lust, or revenge, to produce the dreadful catastrophe we just have witnessed: yet in the short space of a single month or fortnight we see that scenes of distress, shocking beyond any thing of which we can at present form even a conception, would arise out of the most imperious circumstances, from laws inherent in the nature and constitution of man, and absolutely independent of all human regulations, namely, *from the unrestricted use of gin*. The inference is direct and unavoidable, that we ought to submit patiently and thankfully to all the abuses, vices, and evils that are to be found in this great city, and flatter, excuse, and encourage them by all the means in our power, *because* they all of them together do not amount to a tenth part of the mischief that would be the consequence of the unrestrained indulgence of a single pernicious habit. This is something the way in which Mr. Malthus reasons about the unrestricted increase of population. But the absurdity is too gross even for burlesque.

The following is, I conceive, a fair summary of Mr. Malthus's theory. First, that the principle of population is a necessary, mechanical thing, that it is the 'grinding law of necessity,' unavoidably leading to a certain degree of vice and misery, and in fact accounting for almost all the evils in human life. Secondly, that all

the other sources of vice and misery which have been so much and idly insisted on, have no tendency to increase the necessary evils of population, but the contrary, or that the removal of those different sources of evil would instead of lessening the evils of population, which are much the most important, really aggravate them. Here then three questions naturally present themselves.

First, how much of the vice and misery in society is actually owing to human institutions, or the passions, follies, imperfections, or perversities of human nature, independently of the principle of population.

Secondly, whether the removing or diminishing the evils produced by those causes would necessarily increase the evils of population, and open a door to the influx of more vice and misery than ever.

Thirdly, whether the tendency of population to excess is the effect of a simple principle operating mechanically, whether it is to be looked upon as one of the laws inherent in our very nature, or whether the state of morals in every country does not depend greatly and principally on the state of society, on the condition of the people, on public opinion, and on a variety of other causes which are more or less within our power; that is, whether human institutions, laws, &c. instead of being the mere blind instruments of this principle, do not re-act very powerfully upon it, and give it its direction and limits.—If it can be shewn under this last head, that there is some connection between the form of government and the state of morals, and that the better the government, the better the morals, the evils of population instead of forming an excuse for bad governments will only aggravate their mischief, and increase the necessity of getting rid of them. Again, if it can be made to appear that there is no necessary, or general proportion between the degree of vice in any country, and the pressure of population on the means of subsistence, that it is not always the effect of want, but constantly outruns the occasion, being self-propagated, and often spreading like a contagion through those countries and those ranks in life, where the difficulty of providing for a family is least felt, this will shew that the mere existence of vice is no proof of its being necessary, or that it is to be considered as a test of the excessive increase of population.

Farther, if on the other hand, improving the condition of the lower classes of the people is generally found, instead of leading to an unrestrained increase of population, and thus adding to their misery, to give them a greater attachment to the decencies and comforts of life, to make them more cautious how they part with them, to open their ideas and prospects, to strengthen the principle of

moral restraint, and so confine population within reasonable limits, this will be an additional motive for improving their condition (really and truly, not by taking from them the comforts and privileges they already possess). Again, if it should be found that independently of the immediate acts of tyranny exercised by particular governments, and the poverty and wretchedness experienced by certain classes of the community there is a tendency in some governments to keep population down infinitely below the level to which it might rise by a proper encouragement of agriculture, and the methods of industry by which population is supported, it will be but a poor defence of the folly or tyranny of such governments to say, that they are a necessary expedient to prevent the excess of population.

Lastly, if those states or communities, where the greatest equality prevails, are those which maintain the greatest number of inhabitants, and where the principle of moral restraint is likely to operate with most effect, that is, where population is soonest able to reach its utmost limits, and goes the least beyond them, certainly those institutions which favour the greatest disparity of conditions, the extremes of poverty and the extremes of luxury, will receive no very striking support from the principle of population. These are I think the chief points and inferences to which I wish to direct the reader's attention in the few slight remarks which I have to make upon the subject.

It may be proper to observe, in the first place, that Mr. Malthus by making vice and misery the necessary consequences of his favourite principle lays himself open to a very obvious objection. For if he means to prove any thing by his theory, the question immediately is, what degree of vice and misery is rendered necessary by this principle, or by the *physical constitution of man*? Are we to suppose that only so much evil is necessary as naturally grows out of the British constitution? Or does this principle also prove that all the evils that are suffered under the Turkish government, or that were suffered under the old government of France, or that may arise out of its present government are equally necessary and salutary? How far are we to go? Where are we to stop? Are we to consider every evil and abuse as necessary, merely because it exists, or only as much of the thing as we cannot get rid of? But how much can we really get rid of? Are vice and misery uniformly owing to the development of this principle in certain situations, or are they to be in part ascribed to the intervention of other arbitrary, and gratuitous causes, the operation of which may be more easily set aside? In what manner are we to distinguish between what is necessary, and what is not? All these questions require to be asked before we can proceed to build any practical conclusions on Mr. Malthus's theory of the evils of popula-

tion. The vague, general term, 'vice and misery,' gives us no clue. It is mere cant; and applies equally to the best and worst of all possible governments. It proves either nothing, or it proves a great deal more than I conceive Mr. Malthus would in all cases wish to prove by it.

There is no species of vice or oppression that does not find a ready excuse in this kind of reasoning. And besides, by leaving the quantity of vice and misery always uncertain, we never subject ourselves to the necessity of following a general principle into any obnoxious conclusions; and are always at liberty to regulate our opinions according to our convenience by saying—I would have no more vice and misery than at present prevails: but that degree of vice and misery which is inwoven with the present constitution of things, I would by no means have removed, it might endanger the whole fabric. This is a double advantage. We thus sacrifice to the powers that be, without violating decorum, or being driven off our guard by an inflexible and pedantic logic. I have so good an opinion of Mr. Malthus that I do not think he has any predilection for vice and misery in the abstract, or for their own sakes: I do not believe he would stand forward as the advocate of any abuses from which he himself does not reap some benefit, or which he may not get something by defending.

I do not know that I can go so far as with Mr. Godwin to ascribe the original sin of the worst men to social institutions, but of this I am very sure that that original sin and those institutions do not proceed entirely from the principle of population. There are other vices and mischievous propensities inherent in our nature, besides the love of pleasure. We are troubled with a complication of disorders, and it is bad advice to say, that we ought to direct all our attention to the one that is perhaps the most inveterate, or because we despair of doing any thing with that, make no attempts to counteract the progress of the others, either by palliatives or otherwise. If we are deceived with respect to the real extent, and sources of our disorders, it is impossible we should hit upon the right method of cure, whatever might be the case, if we were informed of our true situation.—The principle of population alone, according to the description Mr. Malthus gives of it as a principle of unbridled and insatiable lust, would indeed be sufficient to account for all the vice and misery in the world, and for a great deal more than there is in the world. It would soon overturn every thing. But we have seen that that account is not just. It is in fact only one of the principles or passions by which the conduct of mankind is influenced; and he would be a bold man who should assert that neither ambition, nor avarice, nor sloth,

nor ignorance, nor prejudice have had any share in producing the various evils that abound in civil society. The other passions are sturdy claimants and know how to bustle for themselves, and will not be so easily pushed out of the world. Let any one write the words, ambition, pride, cruelty, hatred, oppression, falsehood, selfishness, indolence, lust, and hunger in the same line, and let him see if there is any peculiar charm in the two last, which draws all their virtue and meaning out of the rest. Yet this is the impression which Mr. Malthus seems anxious to leave on the minds of his readers. Indeed all the others appear to owe their efficacy and their sting to lust alone. If it were not for this one principle, the world might go on very well.

Mr. Malthus charges it as a great error on Mr. Godwin's system that 'political regulations and the established administration of property are with him the fruitful sources of all evil, the hotbeds of all the crimes that degrade mankind.' Be it so, that this is an error. The next question is, as Mr. Malthus does not deny that these institutions are the immediate causes of many of the evils that exist, to what principle they really owe their rise. Mr. Malthus says, they are the necessary results of laws inherent in our nature, and that though all the other passions and vices of men could be got rid of altogether, the principle of population alone would still render those institutions with all the abuses belonging to them as necessary as ever. This I take upon me to dispute. Will he say, that (leaving the principle of population entirely out of the question) pride, avarice, and indolence have had no share in the establishment, or continuance of the inequality of property, in goading men on to the accumulation of immense riches by oppression, extortion, fraud, perjury, and every species of villainy, or in making them undergo every kind of distress, sooner than apply themselves to some regular and useful occupation. If I were inclined to maintain a paradox on the subject, I might take up Hume's assertion, 'that indolence is the source of all mischief in the world.' For if men had not been averse to labour, if there had been no idlers to take advantage of, to offer temptation to, and enlist upon any terms in any lawless enterprize, that promised an easy booty, the tyrant would have been without his slaves, the robber without his gang, and the rich man without his dependents. But these smart points and pithy sayings are soon found to be fallacious, if we attend a little closely to the subject. For instance, it may be true that if there had been no idle people, there would have been no one to take advantage of, but if there had been no pride, rapacity, or selfishness, there would have been no one to take an undue advantage of them, or foment the mischief. The fellows that generally compose

a gang of robbers only wish to gain a cheap livelihood by acts of violence; the captain of the gang is also actuated by vanity, revenge, the spirit of adventure, and the desire to keep the country for twenty or thirty miles round in awe of him. The common soldier is glad of sixpence a-day to be shot at every now and then, and do nothing the rest of his time: the general is not easy, unless he can lay waste provinces, overrun kingdoms, and make the world ring with the terror of his name. The lazy and unthinking would not do half the mischief, of which they are capable, without the active, the enterprizing and turbulent: fools and knaves are as necessary to the body politic, as the head and limbs are to the human body. The Romans might have staid quietly within their own walls, but for the plotting heads at home that sent them out to victory; and his thirty thousand followers would no more have thought of setting out to India of their own accord, than Alexander would have thought of marching there by himself.

It is to me pretty clear that as long as there are such passions as sloth and rapacity, these will be sufficient to account for the unequal division of property, and will render the laws relating to it necessary: and it is equally clear to my mind that if these passions could be completely subdued, so that no one would refuse his share in the common labour, or endeavour to take an unfair advantage of others either by force or fraud, that the established administration of property would be no longer necessary.[1] If, as Mr. Malthus supposes,

[1] Such a change would not require the perfect subjugation, or rather annihilation of these passions, or perfect virtue, in the literal sense, as Mr. Malthus seems to imply in a late publication—which I have not read. It might as well be pretended that no man could ever keep his fingers off bank-notes, or pay his debts, who was not perfectly honest. In neither case is there required any thing more than such a superiority in one set for motives over another, from pride, habit, example, opinion, &c. as just to incline the balance. The gentlemen of the society of Lloyd's fund would no doubt scorn to touch a shilling of the money entrusted to their care: yet we should hardly conclude from hence that they are all of them persons of perfectly disinterested characters, and altogether indifferent to money-matters. The Turks, it is said, who are very far from the character of perfection, leave their goods for sale on an open stall, and the buyer comes and takes what he wants, and leaves the money on the stall. Men are not governed by extreme motives. If perfect virtue were necessary to common honesty, fair dealing, and propriety of conduct, there would be nothing but swindlers and black-guards in the world. Men steer clear of the law not so much through fear, as because it stamps the public opinion. It is a positive thing. If men could make up their minds as decidedly about the general characters and conduct of individuals without, as they do with, the rough rebuke of the law to sharpen their moral sense (to which by the bye Mr. Godwin's plan of plain speaking would contribute not a little) this would go a great way towards rendering a system of equality practicable. But I meddle with these questions only as things of idle speculation. *Jactet se in aulis, &c.*

'Benevolence had so far established her reign in all hearts,' that every one was ready to give up the enjoyments of ease and luxury as far as related to himself, I do not think that in such a state of unparalleled disinterestedness and heroic virtue, any madman would be found to violate the public happiness, and begin the work of contention anew, for the sake of transmitting a contingent inheritance of vice and misery *to his heirs!* If reason and virtue are at present no match for the principle of population, neither are they a match for the principle of selfishness, or for any of our other passions. But truly, if benevolence had once established her reign in all hearts, we should see wonders, she would perform the part of vice and misery to a miracle.—It is evident then that the seeds of inequality, of vice and misery are not sown entirely in the principle of population; that the same untoward passions which first rendered civil establishments necessary, have continued to operate ever since, that they have produced most of the disorders in the world, and are still in as much force as ever; that they very well deserve a chapter by themselves in the history of human nature, and ought not to come in as a note or parenthesis to Mr. Malthus's great work.

But whatever account we may chuse to give of the origin of the establishment of property or government in general, this has nothing to do with the real question, unless it could be shewn that the same form of government, the same inequality of conditions, and the same degree of vice and misery are to be found alike in every country. Mr. Malthus's system goes to the support of all political regulations and existing evils, or it goes to the support of none. Let us cast our eyes over the map of Europe, and ask whether all that variety of governments and manners by which it is distinguished took their rise solely from the principle of population. A principle common to human nature, a law inherent in the physical constitution of man, may in its progress be necessarily attended with a certain degree of vice and misery; but it cannot be productive of different degrees of vice and misery in different countries; as the stern law of necessity, it must operate every where alike. If it does not do so, this of itself shews that it is not the sole moving spring in all human institutions, that it is not beyond the reach of all regulation and control, and that there are other circumstances, accidents, and principles on which the happiness of nations depends. Whatever difference there is, then, between one government and another, whether that government is despotic, or mixed, or free; whatever difference there is in the administration of that government, whether it is cruel, oppressive, and arbitrary in the extreme, or mild, just, and merciful; whatever difference there is between the manners of one nation and those of another,

whether the most licentious that can be, or strict and exemplary; whatever difference there is in the arts and conveniences of life, in the improvements of trade and agriculture in various countries, whatever differences are produced by religion, by contrarieties of opinion, by the state of knowledge, by useful or mischievous regulations of all kinds, all these cannot be owing to one and the same cause.

Will Mr. Malthus say that all these differences are as nothing, that they are not worth insisting on, or contending about, that they are nominal, rather than real, or at any rate that what is gained in one way is lost in another, for that the principle of population still requires the same vent, and produces first or last the same quantity of vice and misery of one sort or other in every country? He must assert on the one hand that all other causes put together do not materially affect the happiness of a people, or on the other hand that the state of all those other causes depends on, and arises out of the state of population, though they do not in the least influence the principle of population itself. These absurdities, than which it would be difficult to advance greater, are however necessary to bear out the author's conclusion, that arts, knowledge, liberty and virtue, and the best institutions can do little for the happiness of mankind. For instance, if it is true that religion or opinion of any kind exerts a direct influence over morals, then it is not true that morals depend entirely on the state of population. Or if it is true, that the invention of a useful art, which is accident, or the public encouragement of it, which is design, may contribute to the support of a larger population without multiplying its inconveniences, then it is not true that all human happiness or misery can be calculated according to a mechanical ratio. But these matters are, I confess, set in the clearest light by a reference to facts, and I can quote no better authority than Mr. Malthus himself.

He says, 'It will not be difficult, from the accounts of travellers, to trace the checks to population, and the causes of its present decay [in Turkey]; and as there is little difference in the *manners* of the Turks, whether they inhabit Europe or Asia, it will not be worth while to make them the subject of distinct consideration.' [I shall presume that I have so far reconciled the reader's mind to the bugbear, population, that he will not regard *depopulation* as one of the most beautiful features in the economy of a state.]

Our author then proceeds, 'The fundamental cause of the low state of population in Turkey, compared with its extent of territory, is undoubtedly the nature of its government. Its tyranny, its feebleness, its bad laws and worse administration of them, with the consequent insecurity of property, throw such obstacles in the way of

agriculture, that the means of subsistence are necessarily decreasing yearly, and with them, of course, the number of people. The *miri* or general land-tax, paid to the sultan, is in itself moderate; but by abuses inherent in the Turkish government, the pachas, and their agents have found out the means of rendering it ruinous. Though they cannot absolutely alter the impost which has been established by the sultan, they have introduced a number of changes, which, without the name, produce all the effect of an augmentation. In Syria, according to Volney, having the greatest part of the land at their disposal, they clog their concessions with burthensome conditions, and exact the half, and sometimes even two-thirds of the crop. When the harvest is over, they cavil about losses, and, as they have the power in their hands, they carry off what they think proper.' [What they leave behind them, is what Mr. Malthus when he gets into his abstractions calls '*the fund appropriated to the maintenance of labour*,' or, '*the aggregate quantity of food possessed by the owners of land beyond their own consumption*.'] 'If the season fail, they still exact the same sum, and expose every thing that the poor peasant possesses to sale. To these constant oppressions are added a thousand accidental extortions. Sometimes a whole village is laid under contribution for some real or imaginary offence. Arbitrary presents are exacted on the accession of each governor; grass, barley, and straw are demanded for his horses'; [Mr. Malthus thinks, farther on in his book, that 'the waste of the rich, and the horses kept for pleasure' in this country are no detriment to the poor *here*, but rather a benefit, page 478.] 'and commissions are multiplied, that the soldiers who carry the orders may live upon the starving peasants, whom they treat with the most brutal insolence and injustice. The consequence of these depredations is, that the poorer class of inhabitants, ruined, and unable any longer to pay the *miri*, become a burden to the village,' [something I suppose in the same way that the poor among us become a burden to the parish] 'or fly into the cities; but the *miri* is unalterable, and the sum to be levied must be found somewhere. The portion of those who are thus driven from their homes falls on the remaining inhabitants, whose burden, though at first light, now becomes insupportable. If they should be visited by two years of drought and famine, the whole village is ruined and abandoned; and the tax, which it should have paid, is levied on the neighbouring lands. The same mode of proceeding takes place with regard to the tax on Christians, which has been raised by these means,' [by what means, by the principle of population?] 'from three, five, and eleven piastres, at which it was first fixed, to thirty-five and forty, which absolutely impoverishes those on whom it is levied, and obliges them

to leave the country. It has been remarked that these exactions have made a rapid progress during the last forty years, from which time are dated the decline of agriculture, the depopulation of the country, and the diminution in the quantity of the specie carried to Constantinople. The peasants are every where reduced to a little flat cake of barley, or *doura*, onions, lentils, and water. Not to lose any part of their corn they leave in it all sorts of wild grain, which often produces bad consequences. In the mountains of Lebanon and Nablous, in time of dearth, they gather the acorns from the oak which they eat after boiling or roasting them on the ashes. By a natural consequence of this misery, the art of cultivation is in the most deplorable state. The husbandman is almost without instruments, and those he has are very bad. His plough is frequently no more than the branch of a tree cut below a fork and used without wheels. The ground is tilled by asses and cows, rarely by oxen, which would bespeak too much riches. In the districts exposed to the Arabs, as in Palestine, the countryman must sow with his musket in his hand, and scarcely does the corn turn yellow before it is reaped and concealed in subterraneous caverns. As little as possible is employed for seed corn, because the peasants sow no more than is barely necessary for their subsistence. Their whole industry is limited to the supply of their immediate wants, and to procure a little bread, a few onions, a blue shirt, and a bit of woollen, much labour is not necessary. The peasant lives therefore in distress, but at least he does not enrich his tyrants, and the avarice of despotism is its own punishment.' [*Note.*—These are the unhappy persons, as our author expresses it in a passage, which may hereafter be quoted at length, 'who in the great lottery of life have drawn a blank; and with whose exorbitant and unreasonable demands the owners of the aforesaid surplus produce neither think it just nor natural to comply.' I confess, I cannot account for all the contention and distress which is here implied, for the conflict between famine and riches, when I seriously consider with Mr. Malthus, 'that the quantity of food, which one man can consume, is necessarily limited by the narrow capacity of the human stomach; that it is not certainly probable that he should throw away the rest; or if he exchanged his surplus produce for the labour of others, that this would be better than that these others should absolutely *starve*.' But human life, as well as our reasonings about it, is a mystery, a dream.] 'This picture which is drawn by Volney, in describing the state of the peasants in Syria, seems to be confirmed by all the other travellers in these countries, and according to Eton, it represents very nearly the condition of the peasants in the greater part of the Turkish dominions. Universally

the offices of every denomination are set up to public sale, and in the intrigues of the seraglio, by which the disposal of all places is regulated, every thing is done by means of bribes. The pachas in consequence, who are sent into the provinces, exert to the utmost their power of extortion, but are always outdone by the officers immediately below them, who, in their turn, leave room for their subordinate agents. The pacha must raise money to pay the tribute, and also to indemnify himself for the purchase of his office; support his dignity, and make a provision in case of accidents; and as all power, both civil and military, centers in his person, from his representing the sultan, the means are at his discretion, and the quickest are invariably considered as the best. Uncertain of to-morrow, he treats his province as a mere transient possession, and endeavours to reap, if possible, in one day, the fruit of many years, without the smallest regard to his successor, or the injury that he may do to the permanent revenue. The cultivator is necessarily more exposed to these extortions than the inhabitants of the towns. From the nature of his employment, he is fixed to one spot, and the productions of agriculture do not admit of being easily concealed. *The tenure of the land and the right of succession are besides uncertain.* When a father dies, the inheritance reverts to the sultan, and the children can only redeem the succession by a considerable sum of money. These considerations naturally occasion an indifference to landed estates. The country is deserted, and each person is desirous of flying to the towns, where he will not only in general meet with better treatment, but may hope to acquire a species of wealth, which he can more easily conceal from the eyes of his rapacious masters. To complete the ruin of agriculture, a maximum is in many cases established, and the peasants are obliged to furnish the towns with corn at a fixed price. It is a maxim of Turkish policy, originating in the feebleness of the government, and the fear of popular tumults, to keep the price of corn low in all the considerable towns. In the case of a failure in the harvest, every person who possesses any corn is obliged to sell it at the price fixed, under pain of death: and if there be none in the neighbourhood, other districts are ransacked for it. When Constantinople is in want of provisions, ten provinces are perhaps famished for a supply. At Damascus, during a scarcity in 1784, the people paid only one penny farthing a pound for their bread, while the peasants in the villages were absolutely dying with hunger. *The effect of such a system of government* on agriculture, need not be insisted on. The causes of the decreasing means of subsistence are but too obvious; and the checks which keep the population down to the level of these decreasing resources, may be traced with nearly equal

certainty, and will appear to include almost every species of vice and misery.' Happy country, secured by the very nature of its government from the terrors of increasing population, and where every species of vice and misery, wisely anticipated, on the principle that the imagination of a thing is worse than the reality, takes away all fear of any greater evils than those they already endure!

In the same chapter, he says, that in Persia 'the lower classes of people are obliged to defer marriage till late; and that it is only among the rich that this union takes place early. The dreadful convulsions to which this country has been subject for many hundred years, must have been fatal to her agriculture. The periods of repose from external wars, and internal commotions have been short and few, and even during the times of profound peace, the frontier provinces have been constantly subject to the ravages of the Tartars.—The effect of this state of things is such as might be expected. The proportion of uncultivated to cultivated land, Sir John Chardin states to be, ten to one; and the mode in which the officers of the state and private owners let out their lands to husbandmen, is not that *which is best calculated to reanimate industry*. The other checks to population in Persia are nearly the same as those in Turkey. *The superior destruction of the plague in Turkey is perhaps nearly balanced by the greater frequency of internal commotions in Persia.*'

These extracts furnish, I think, a tolerably clear idea of the manner in which it is possible for human institutions to aggravate instead of mitigating the *necessary* evils of population. We have a sufficient specimen of the effects of bad government, of bad laws, of the worse execution of them, of feeble and selfish policy, of wars and commotions, or of diseases probably occasioned for the most part by the numbers of people who are huddled together in dirt and poverty in the great towns in the manner we have seen—in altering the natural proportion between the produce of the soil, and the maintenance of the inhabitants; in wantonly diminishing the means of subsistence by a most unjust and unequal distribution of them; in diverting the produce of industry from its proper channels, in drying up its sources, in causing a stagnation of all the motives and principles which animate human life, in destroying all confidence, independence, hope, cheerfulness, and manly exertion, in thwarting the bounties of nature by waste, rapacity, extortion and violence, and spreading want, misery, and desolation in their stead. How admirably does Mr. Malthus balance his checks! What the plague does in Turkey, is in Persia happily effected by means of civil commotions. Population is thus kept down to the level of the means of subsistence. But it seems, that wars, and intestine commotions, those blind drudges of Providence

in clearing away the filth, rubbish, and other evils of a too crowded population, sometimes go beyond their errand, or do their work the wrong way, by striking at the root of population instead of lopping off its superfluous branches. According to our author's general system, the killing ten, or twenty, or a hundred thousand men is an evil of a very trifling magnitude, if it is to be looked upon as an evil at all. Population will only go on with the greater alacrity, marriage will be rendered more practicable, and the deficiency will soon be supplied from the sprightly and ever-teeming source of nature. The dreadful convulsions, however, to which Persia has been subject for so many hundred years have not been merely vents to carry off the excess of population beyond the means of subsistence, but they have further been fatal to agriculture itself, or to those very means of subsistence. The proportion of *uncultivated* to *cultivated* land, we find, is ten to one; so that the population is not only reduced to a level with the means of subsistence, but reduced ten times lower than it need be.[1]

I beg leave to accompany this description of the effects of political regulations and the established administration of property in Turkey, with the following critical commentary, taken from another part of the same work, which will throw considerable light on the *necessity* of those institutions to prevent the evils of population. Mr. Malthus's usual plea for 'vice and misery,' is that nothing else can put a stop to the excesses of population; which *they* do in the most effectual and eligible manner. But he has here deserted his idols.

'It has appeared, I think, clearly, in the review of different societies given in the former part of this work, that those countries, the inhabitants of which were sunk in the most barbarous ignorance, or oppressed by the most cruel tyranny, however low they might be in actual population, were very populous in proportion to their means of subsistence; and upon the slightest failure of the seasons, generally suffered the severities of want.' [Yet it was the sole object of Mr. Malthus's discovery to prove the converse proposition, that the highest degree of knowledge, and a perfect exemption from every species of tyranny would only lead to the lowest state of human wretchedness.]—'Ignorance and despotism seem to have no tendency to destroy the passion which prompts to increase; *but they effectually destroy the checks to it from reason and foresight.* The improvident barbarian who thinks only of his present wants, or the miserable peasant, who from his political situation feels little security of reaping what he has sown, will seldom be deterred from gratifying his passions by the prospect of inconveniences which cannot be expected to press

[1] See also other passages giving an account of the state of population in Africa, &c. which will be found at the end.

on him under three or four years. But though this want of foresight, which is fostered by ignorance and despotism, tend thus rather to encourage the procreation of children, it is absolutely fatal to the industry which is to support them. Industry cannot exist without foresight and security. The indolence of the savage is well known; and the poor Egyptian or Abyssinian farmer, without capital, who rents land, which is let out yearly to the highest bidder and who is constantly subject to the demands of his tyrannical masters, to the casual plunder of an enemy, and not unfrequently to the violation of his miserable contract, can have no heart to be industrious, and if he had, could not exercise that industry with success. Even poverty itself, which appears to be the great spur to industry, when it has once passed certain limits, almost ceases to operate. The indigence which is hopeless, destroys all vigorous exertion, and confines the efforts to what is sufficient for bare existence. *It is the hope of bettering our condition and the fear of want, rather than want itself, that is the best stimulus to industry, and its most constant and best directed efforts will almost invariably be found among a class of people above the class of the wretchedly poor.*'

What a pity that a man, who writes so well at times, should, for the sake of an hypothesis, involve 'himself in absurdities and contradictions that would disgrace the lips of an ideot.' Mr. Malthus will excuse me, if I make use of some of the hints contained in this excellent passage, for the benefit of our English poor, who I think should not have harder measure dealt them than others, and try to soften some of the harshest constructions of the grinding law of necessity in their favour. I do not see why they alone are to be the martyrs of an abstraction. But Mr. Malthus reserves the application of his theory *in its purity* for his own countrymen. He has some natural feelings, and a certain degree of tender weakness for the distresses of other countries, but he will not suffer his feelings for a moment to get the better of his reason, with regard to those to whom he is bound by stronger ties, and over whose interests he watches with a paternal anxiety. He will hear of no palliations, no excuses, no shuffling temporary expedients to put off the evil day, he insists upon their submitting to the full operation of the penalty incurred by the laws of God and of nature, nothing short of the utmost severity will satisfy him, ('tis death to spare) he will not bate them a jot of his argument, he makes them drain the unsavoury cup of misery to the very dregs.

In the same chapter, which is entitled 'Of the principal sources of the prevailing errors on population,' he says, 'It has been observed that many countries at the period of their greatest populousness have

lived in the greatest plenty, and have been able to export corn; but at other periods, when their population was very low, have lived in continual poverty and want, and have been obliged to import corn. Egypt, Palestine, Rome, Sicily, and Spain are cited as particular exemplifications of this fact; and it has been inferred, that an increase of population in any state, not cultivated to the utmost, will tend rather to augment than diminish the relative plenty of the whole society,' &c. After contradicting this inference without giving any reasons against it, he goes on, 'Scarcity and extreme poverty, therefore, may or may not accompany an increasing population, according to circumstances. But they must always accompany a permanently declining population; because there has never been, nor probably ever will be, any other cause than want of food, which makes the population of a country permanently decline. In the numerous instances of depopulation which occur in history, the causes of it may always be traced to the want of industry, or the ill-direction of that industry, arising from violence, bad government, ignorance, &c. which first occasions a want of food, and of course depopulation follows. When Rome adopted the custom of importing all her corn, and laying all Italy into pasture, she soon declined in population. The causes of the depopulation of Egypt and Turkey have already been alluded to; and in the case of Spain, it was certainly not the numerical loss of people, occasioned by the expulsion of the Moors; but the industry and capital thus expelled, which permanently injured her population.' [I do not myself see, how the expulsion of capital could *permanently* injure the population.] 'When a country has been depopulated by violent causes, if a bad government, with its usual concomitant, insecurity of property, ensue, which has generally been the case in all those countries which are now less peopled than formerly; neither the food nor the population, will recover themselves, and the inhabitants will probably live in severe want,' &c. Yet Mr. Malthus elsewhere affects to consider all human institutions and contrivances as perfectly indifferent to the question. We have here, however, a truer account of the matter. The state of population is evidently no proof of what it might be: to judge whether it is more or less than it might or ought to be, we must take into consideration good and bad government, the progress of civilization, &c. It is a thing *de facto*, not *de jure*. It is not that rock, against which whosoever sets himself shall be dashed to pieces, but the clay moulded by the potter into vessels of honour or dishonour. With respect to Spain, it is allowed that her population is deficient, or short of what it might be. The problem of political economy I take to be, how far this is the case with respect to all other countries, and how to remedy the

defect; or how to support the greatest number of people in the greatest degree of comfort. But I have said this more than once before.

To the same purpose I might quote Algernon Sydney, who in his Discourses on government gives the following account of the decline and weakness of many of the modern states from the loss of liberty.[1]

'I take Greece to have been happy and glorious, when it was full of populous cities, flourishing in all the arts that deserve praise among men; when they were courted and feared by the greatest kings, and never assaulted by any but to his own loss and confusion; when Babylon and Susa trembled at the motion of their arms: and their valour, exercised in those wars and tumults, which our author [Filmer] looks upon as the greatest evils, was raised to such a power, that nothing upon earth was found able to resist them. And I think it now miserable, when peace reigns within their empty walls, and the poor remains of those exhausted nations, sheltering themselves under the ruins of the desolated cities, have neither any thing that deserves to be disputed among them, nor spirit or force to repel the injuries they daily suffer from a proud and insupportable master.'

'The like may be said of Italy. Whilst it was inhabited by nations governing themselves by their own will, they fell sometimes into domestic seditions, and had frequent wars with their neighbours. When they were free, they loved their country and were always ready to fight in its defence. Such as succeeded well, increased in vigour and power; and even those which were the most unfortunate in one age, found means to repair their losses, if their government continued. While they had a property in their goods, they would not suffer the country to be invaded, since they knew they could have none, if it were lost. This gave occasion to wars and tumults; it sharpened their courage, kept up a good discipline, and the nations that were most exercised by them, always increased in power and number: so that no country seems ever to have been of greater strength than Italy was when Hannibal invaded it, and after his defeat the rest of the world was not able to resist their valour and power. They sometimes killed one another; but their enemies never got any thing but burying-places within their territories. All things are now brought into a very different method by the blessed governments they are under. The fatherly care of the king of Spain, the pope, and other princes

[1] This is a work which I would recommend to every reader of whatever party, not only for the knowledge it contains, but for the purity, simplicity, and noble dignity of the style. It smacks of the old Roman elevation.

has established peace among them. We have not in many ages heard of any sedition among the Latins, Sabines, Volsci, Equi, Samnites, and others. The thin, half-starved inhabitants of walls supported by ivy fear neither popular tumults, nor foreign alarms; and their sleep is only interrupted by hunger, the cries of their children, or the howling of wolves. Instead of many turbulent, contentious cities, they have a few scattered, silent cottages; and the fierceness of those nations is so tempered, that every rascally collector of taxes extorts, without fear, from every man, that which should be the nourishment of his family. And if any of those countries are free from these pernicious vermin, it is through the extremity of their poverty.'

[How differently do people see things! According to Mr. Malthus, this rascally tax-gatherer, this vile nuisance, is a very sacred sort of character, a privileged person, one of the most indispensable and active instruments in the procession of vice and misery, those harbingers of human happiness; and all our reproaches and indignation should fall on the poor peasant, for bringing beings into the world whom he could not maintain, in 'the face of the clearest warning, and in defiance of the express command of God,' as proved by the tax-book. Our superficial politician was not aware (Mr. Malthus tells us that first appearances are very deceitful) that the produce of the husbandman's labour was much better employed in supporting the waste and extravagance of the rich, than in affording nourishment to his family, as this would only enable him to *rear* his family, which must operate as an encouragement to marriage, and this again would produce other marriages, and so on *ad infinitum*, to which unrestricted increase of population it is necessary to put a timely stop.]

'Even in Rome a man may be circumvented by the fraud of a priest, or poisoned by one, who would have his estate, wife, whore, or child; but nothing is done that looks like violence or tumult. The governors do as little fear Gracchus as Hannibal; and instead of wearying their subjects in wars,' [We have not yet reached this pitch of perfection] 'they only seek by perverted laws, corrupt judges, false witnesses, and vexatious suits, to cheat them of their money and inheritance. This is the best part of their condition. Where these arts are used, there are men, and they have something to lose; but for the most part, the lands lie waste; and they who were formerly troubled with the disorders incident to populous cities, now enjoy the quiet and peaceable estate of a wilderness.— Again, there is a way of killing worse than that of the sword; for as Tertullian says upon a different occasion, *vetare nasci est interficere*; those governments are in the highest degree guilty of blood, which

by taking from men the means of living, bring some to perish through want, drive others out of the country, and generally dissuade men from marriage, *by taking from them all ways of supporting their families.*' [Our author, we see, has not here put the cart before the horse. He seems to have understood the necessity of food to population, though Mr. Malthus's essay had not then been heard of.] 'Notwithstanding all the seditions of Florence, and other cities of Tuscany, the horrid factions of Guelphs and Gibelines,[1] Neri and Bianchi, nobles and commons, they continued populous, strong, and exceeding rich; but in the space of less than a hundred and fifty years, the peaceable reign of the Medici is thought to have destroyed nine parts in ten of the people of that province. Among other things it is remarkable, that when Philip the second of Spain gave Sienna to the Duke of Florence, his embassador then at Rome sent him word, that he had given away more than six hundred and fifty thousand subjects; and it is not believed there are now twenty thousand souls inhabiting that city and territory. Pisa, Pistoia, Arezzo, Cortona, and other towns, that were then good and populous, are in the like proportion diminished, and Florence more than any. When that city had been long troubled with seditions, tumults, and wars, for the most part unprosperous, it still retained such strength, that when Charles the eighth of France, being admitted as a friend with his whole army, which soon after conquered the kingdom of Naples, thought to master them, the people, taking up arms, struck such a terror into him, that he was glad to depart upon such conditions as they thought fit to impose. Machiavel reports, that in the year 1298 Florence alone, with the Val d'Arno, a small territory belonging to that city, could, in a few hours, by the sound of a bell, bring together a hundred thousand well-armed men. Whereas now that city, with all the others in that province, are brought to such despicable weakness, emptiness, poverty, and baseness, that they can neither resist the oppressions of their own prince, nor defend him or themselves, if they were assaulted by a foreign enemy. The people are dispersed

[1] I should like to know whether Mr. Malthus would go so far as to say that all the wars and rebellions occasioned by religion, that all the plots, assassinations, burnings, massacres, the persecutions, feuds, animosities, hatreds and jealousy of different sects, that the cruelty, bigotry, the pernicious customs, and abominable practices of the Pagan and other superstitions, such as human sacrifices, &c. whether all those mischiefs and enormities of which religion has been made a tool, whether the martyrdom of the first christians, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the fires of Smithfield, the expeditions to the holy land, the Gunpowder Plot, the Inquisition, the long Parliament, the Reformation and the Revolution,—Popery, Protestantism, 'monks, eremites, and friars, with all their trumpery' were the offspring of the principle of population.

or destroyed, and the best families sent to seek habitations in Venice, Genoa, Rome, and Lucca. This is not the effect of war or pestilence: they enjoy a perfect peace, and suffer no other plague than the government they are under. But he who has thus cured them of disorders and tumults does in my opinion deserve no greater praise than a physician, who should boast there was not a sick person in a house committed to his care, when he had poisoned all that were in it. The Spaniards have established the like peace in the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, the West Indies, and other places. The Turks by the same means prevent tumults in their dominions. And they are of such efficacy in all places, that Mario Chigi, brother to pope Alexander the seventh, by one sordid cheat upon the sale of corn, is said within eight years to have destroyed above a third part of the people in the ecclesiastical state. And that country, which was the strength of the Romans in the time of the Carthaginian wars, suffered more by the covetousness and fraud of that villain, than by all the defeats received from Hannibal, &c. Chap. ii. p. 223.

It will be worth the reader's while to turn to Lord Kaims's account of the kingdom of Siam, which, though one of the most fertile countries in the world, is reduced to the lowest state of poverty and wretchedness by the absurd and tyrannical policy of its government. Some of the finest districts that were formerly cultivated, are now inhabited only by wild beasts. One of the arts by which they preserve the balance of population in that country is, that the keeper of the king's menagerie is authorized to let loose the elephants into the gardens of all those within a given distance of the capital, who do not pay him a large fine yearly to be excused from this intrusion. Yet according to our Essayist, human institutions have a very slight influence on the happiness of a people, because they cannot alter the necessary ratios of the increase of food and population. It is probable, however, that some of the cases here cited, which seem to bear rather hard on Mr. Malthus's rule, might have led those hasty writers, whom he censures for their want of a due insight into the subject, to conceive an unjust prejudice against human institutions; and perhaps some of my readers may also be led to suspect, from not comprehending fully the scope and connection of his arguments, that bad governments are not quite such innocent things, as Mr. Malthus would sometimes represent them. Is it necessary to press this subject any farther? I do not pretend to be very deep-read in history, in the constitution of states, the principles of legislation, the progress of manners, or the immediate causes of the revolutions that have taken place in different countries. All that I can presume to bring to this question is a little stubborn common sense, an earnestness of feeling,

and a certain familiarity with abstruse subjects, that is not willingly or easily made the dupe of flimsy distinctions. But without much learning in one's self, it is easy to take advantage of the learning of others. By the help of a common-place book, which is all that is wanted in these cases (and I am fortunate enough to have such a one by me in the collections of 'that honest chronicler,' James Burgh) I might soon swell the size of these letters to a bulk, which the bookseller would not like, by a number of striking illustrations from the most celebrated authors. I might make myself a splendid livery of the wisdom of others. But I have no taste for this pompous drudgery. However, to satisfy those readers who are unable to discern the truth without the spectacles of facts, it will not be amiss to refer to the opinions of a few of the writers, who seem with sufficient clearness to have traced the causes of the rise and fall of particular states to principles quite independent of, which were neither first set in motion nor afterwards regulated by the principle of population, and the effects of which were utterly disproportionate to the actual operation of that principle. After all, it is impossible to answer a paradox satisfactorily. The real answer consists of the feelings and observations of our whole lives; and of course, it must be impossible to embody these in any single statement. All that can be done in these cases is to set the imagination once more in its old track.

'Hear,' says my authority, 'the excellent Montague on the prevalence of luxury among the Romans.'

'If we connect the various strokes interspersed through what we have remaining of the writings of Sallust, which were levelled at the vices of his countrymen, we shall be able to form a just idea of the manners of the Romans in his time. From this picture, we must be convinced, that not only those shocking calamities, which the republic suffered during the contest between Marius and Sylla, but those subsequent and more fatal evils, which brought on the utter extinction of the Roman liberty and constitution, were the natural effects of that foreign luxury, which first introduced venality and corruption.' [Now by *luxury* we may understand a very great superabundance of the good things of this life, either in the community at large or in certain classes of it, but it cannot by any construction be made to signify the general and absolute want of them. Luxury in some classes may produce want in others, but poverty is in this case the effect of the unequal distribution of the produce of the earth, not of its real deficiency. Or if by luxury we understand only certain exterior decorations or artificial indulgences, which have nothing to do with the real support of life, such as dress, furniture, buildings, pictures, gold and silver, rarities,

delicacies of all kinds, every thing connected with shew and expence (though all these things among the Romans being the effects not merely of leisure or of supernumerary hands, but of *power*, and foreign dominion, must imply a command over the more substantial necessaries of life) yet even in this sense the passion for luxury or for those indulgences (which is here said to have been one great instrument in the overthrow of the state) is certainly a very different thing from the passion of hunger, or want of food, Mr. Malthus's key to the solution of all problems of a political nature.] 'Though the introduction of luxury from Asia preceded the ruin of Carthage in point of time, yet as Sallust informs us, the dread of that dangerous rival restrained the Romans within the bounds of decency and order. But as soon as ever *that obstacle was removed*, they gave a full scope to their ungoverned passions. The change in their manners was not gradual, and by little and little as before, but rapid and instantaneous. Religion, justice, modesty, decency, all regard for divine or human laws, were swept away at once by the irresistible torrent of corruption. The nobility strained their privileges, and the people their liberty, alike into the most unbounded licentiousness. Every one made the dictate of his own will, his only rule of action. Public virtue, and the love of their country, which had raised the Romans to the empire of the universe, were extinct. Money, which alone could enable them to gratify their darling luxury, was substituted in its place. Power, dominion, honours, and universal respect were annexed to the possession of money. Contempt, and whatever was the most reproachful was the bitter portion of poverty; and to be poor, grew to be the greatest of all crimes, in the estimation of the Romans. Thus wealth and poverty contributed alike to the ruin of the republic. The rich employed their wealth in the acquisition of power, and their power in every kind of oppression and rapine for the acquisition of more wealth. The poor, now dissolute and desperate, were ready to engage in every seditious insurrection, which promised them the plunder of the rich, and set up both their liberty and country to sale, to the best bidder. The republic, which was the common prey to both, was thus rent to pieces between the contending factions.—A state so circumstanced must always furnish an ample supply of proper instruments for faction. For as luxury consists in an inordinate gratification of the sensual passions, and as the more they are indulged, the more importunate they grow, the greatest fortune must at last sink under their insatiable demands. Thus luxury necessarily produces corruption. As wealth is necessary to the support of luxury, all those who have dissipated their private fortunes in the purchase of pleasure, will be ever ready to enlist in the cause of faction for the

wages of corruption. And when once the idea of respect and homage is annexed to the possession of wealth alone, honour, probity, every virtue and every amiable quality will be held cheap in comparison and looked upon as awkward, and quite unfashionable. But as the spirit of liberty will yet exist in some degree, in a state which retains the name of freedom, even though the manners of that state should be generally depraved, an opposition will arise from those virtuous citizens, who know the value of their birth-right, liberty, and who will not submit tamely to the chains of faction. Force will then be called in to the aid of corruption, a military government will be established on the ruins of the civil, and all commands and employments will be at the disposal of arbitrary, lawless power. The people will be fleeced to pay for their own fetters, and doomed, like the cattle, to unremitting toil and drudgery, for the support of their tyrannical masters.' [All this is evidently erroneous, when we apply to it the touch-stone of the theory of population. The people are not fleeced and worked in this manner for the benefit of those who fleece and work them, to gratify any appetites or passions of theirs, it is out of pure good-will to the poor wretches themselves, that they may live more at their ease, and in a greater degree of affluence than they would without this timely warning of the evils of poverty.] 'Or if the outward form of civil government should be permitted to remain, the people will be compelled to give a sanction to tyranny by their own suffrages, and to elect oppressors instead of protectors.—From this genuine portrait of the Roman state it is evident that the fatal catastrophe of that republic, of which Sallust himself was an eye-witness, was the natural effect of the corruption of their manners; and again, that this corruption was the effect of the introduction of foreign wealth and luxury. This fatal tendency was too obvious to escape the notice of those who had any regard for liberty and their ancient constitution. Many sumptuary laws were made to restrain the excesses of luxury; but these efforts were too feeble to check the overbearing violence of the torrent. Cato proposed a severe law, enforced by the sanction of an oath, against bribery and corruption at elections; where the scandalous traffic of votes was established by custom, as at a public market. But he only incurred the resentment of both parties by that salutary measure. The rich, who had no other merit to plead but what arose from their superior wealth, thus found themselves precluded from all pretensions to the highest dignities. The electors abused, cursed and even pelted him as the author of a law which reduced them to the necessity of subsisting by labour. Corruption was arrived at its height, and those excesses which were formerly

esteemed the *vices* of the people were now, by the force of custom, become the *manners* of the people. To pilfer the public money and to plunder the provinces by violence, though state crimes of the most heinous nature, were grown so familiar, that they were looked upon as no more than mere office perquisites.' Really I am afraid that the reader will suspect me of falsifying the historical record to write a satire against our own times. Some of these remarks are I confess *home* truths. To a person who has not that mysterious kind of penetration which the author of the Essay possesses, they carry more weight, and give a clearer insight into the principles that operate in the decomposition of states, than all Mr. Malthus's indiscriminate and shadowy reasonings on the evils of population, which can no more prove anything decisively on the subject, than we can account for the inequalities in the surface of the earth from its being round.

The same author adds, 'Though there is a concurrence of several causes in the ruin of a state, yet where luxury prevails, that parent of all our fantastic wants, ever craving, and ever unsatisfied, we may safely assign it as the leading cause; since it ever was and ever will be the most baneful to public virtue. *As luxury is contagious from its very nature*, it will gradually descend from the highest to the lowest ranks till it has ultimately affected a whole people.—We see luxury gradually increasing and prevailing over the Roman spirit and virtue, till at length the contagion *even* reached ladies of the greatest distinction, who in imitation of the prince and his court, had their assemblies and representations in a grove, planted by the Emperor, where booths were built, and in them sold whatever incited to sensuality and wantonness. Thus was even the outward appearance of virtue banished the city, and all manner of avowed lewdness, depravity and dissoluteness introduced in its room, men and women being engaged in a contention to outvie each other in glaring vices, and scenes of impurity. Again.—About the time that the Roman republic was tottering to its fall, it was observed that there was an universal degeneracy of manners prevailing, particularly that the women were very scandalous in their behaviour at Rome, while those of the countries called by them barbarous were remarkably exemplary in this respect.' Was this difference wholly owing to the difference in the state of population? Or shall we believe that the ladies of Roman knights, that the wives and daughters of Emperors, that the mistresses of those to whom the world was tributary, who scattered pearls and gold among their followers, who gave largesses of corn to the people, and entertained them at ten thousand tables at a time, who ate the tongues of peacocks and nightingales, and the brains of parrots, whose dogs were

fed with the livers of geese, their horses with raisins, and their wild beasts with the flesh of partridges and pheasants, shall we believe that these delicate creatures, who dreamt of nothing but pleasure and feasting, who reclined on silken couches, whose baths were made of rose-water and wine, who scented the air with all the perfumes of the East, whose rich dresses were upborne by a train of waiting-women, and idle boys, were driven to the necessity of stimulating their passions by lewd exhibitions, and wanton dances, and lascivious songs, and soft music and obscene practices, because they were hindered from gratifying their honest desires in a lawful way by the difficulty of providing for their future offspring, or the pressure of population on the means of subsistence? Yet this is what we must be led to suppose from Mr. Malthus's theory, according to whom vice is the natural consequence of want, and want the effect of increasing population. For any one who is acquainted with the state of manners, and the mode of living among the great at Rome at this time to pretend that all this was owing to nothing but the advanced state of population, just as the rising or falling of the weather-glass depends on the pressure of the air outside, betrays a most astonishing ignorance of human nature. I think I am warranted in laying down the two following maxims; that luxury is itself an immediate cause of dissoluteness of manners; secondly, that example, particularly that of the great, has a powerful influence over manners.

Before I quit this subject of Roman luxury, I shall just mention a fact quoted by my author, which seems to contradict Mr. Malthus's notion that the luxuries of the rich do not in the least affect the condition of the poor. 'The good Emperor Aurelius,' says Burgh, 'sold the plate, furniture, jewels, pictures and statues of the imperial palace, *to relieve the distresses of the people*, occasioned by the invasion of barbarians, pestilence, famine, &c. the value of which was so great, that it maintained the war for five years, beside other inestimable expences.' If according to Mr. Malthus's reasoning on this subject in different parts of his work, every man's stomach can hold only a certain quantity of food, and what does not go into one man's stomach necessarily goes into some other's, that is, if every person has as large a share as it is possible he should have of the necessaries of life, I do not see what this moving of pictures or statues about, or setting them up to auction should have to do with the state of provisions, or how it should relieve the necessities of the poor. Mr. Malthus's reasonings are sometimes as remarkable for their simplicity as they are at others for their complexity. He sees things in the most natural or in the most artificial point of view, as he pleases. At one time, every thing comes round by a labyrinth of

causes, and all the intricate secretions of the state; at another time the whole science of political economy is reduced to a flat calculation of the size of a quartern loaf, and the size of the human stomach.

All authors (but Mr. Malthus) seem agreed that luxury has been fatal to the spirit of liberty, and that the loss of liberty has led to the loss of independence. 'The welfare of every country depends upon the morals of the people. Though a nation may become rich by trade, thrift, and industry, or from the advantages of soil and situation, or may attain to great eminence and power either by force of arms, or by the sagacity of their councils; yet when their manners are depraved, they will decline insensibly, and at last come to utter destruction. When a country is grown vicious, industry decays, and the people become unruly, effeminate, and unfit for labour. Luxury, when introduced into free states, and suffered to spread through the body of the people was ever productive of that degeneracy of manners, which extinguishes public virtue, and puts a final period to liberty. Thus the Assyrian empire sunk under the arms of Cyrus with his poor but hardy Persians. The extensive and opulent empire of Persia fell an easy prey to Alexander and a handful of Macedonians. And the Macedonian empire, when enervated by the luxury of Asia, was compelled to receive the yoke of the victorious Romans. The descendants of the heroes, philosophers, orators, and free citizens of Greece are now the slaves of the Grand Turk. The posterity of the Scipios and Catos of Rome are now singing operas, in the shape of Italian eunuchs, on the English stage.'[1] It should seem from the length of time which these countries have remained in the same degraded condition without a single effort or even wish to relieve themselves from it, that there must be other causes of the permanent depression of states, and other channels of transmission, by which the habits, and characters of the people, their customs and institutions, are handed down through successive generations without any hope of a change for the better, besides the mechanical fluctuations in the principle of population. If all laws, institutions, manners, and customs were only so many *expressions* (as I may say) of the power of that principle, kingdoms would rise and fall with the operation of the checks provided for it; their alternate renovation and decay would be as regular as the ebbing and flowing of the tide; in proportion as they sank deep in wretchedness, they would tower to greater happiness and splendour; the foundation of their future prosperity would be laid in the lowness of their fortune; the exhausted state would rise, like the phœnix, out of its own ashes, and enter the career of liberty and glory in all its pristine vigour.

[1] See the extracts from Davenant, Montague, and Bolingbroke.

But we do not find that the accounts in history correspond with the oscillations of Mr. Malthus's theory. We find through a long, dreary tract of time, during which our author's ratios must have been ascending and descending like buckets in a well, that the inhabitants of those devoted countries have remained just where they were,—in the lowest scale of human being. They have for a great many hundred years been undergoing the wholesome discipline of vice and misery without being the better for it, the iron yoke of necessity to which they have so long and patiently submitted does not seem ever to have been relaxed in their favour, and they have reaped none of those reversionary benefits which might be expected from slavery and famine. These powerful principles have not done much to rekindle in their breasts their ancient love of liberty, the glow of genius,—or to open a new field for the rapid increase of population. They have not been favoured with any of those *ups* and *downs*, those pretty whirls and agreeable vicissitudes of good and evil, which Mr. Malthus describes as the natural consequence of the principles on which his machine of population is constructed. This is a radical objection to his machine; it shews plainly that it is not constructed on true principles, that we cannot safely trust ourselves in it, and will I hope deter us from getting up into it.

'The Swiss keep the same unchanged character of simplicity, honesty, frugality, modesty, bravery. These are the virtues which preserve liberty. They have no corrupt court, no blood-sucking placemen, no standing army, the ready instruments of tyranny, no ambition for conquest, no debauching commerce, no luxury, no citadels against invasions and against liberty. Their mountains are their fortifications, and every householder is a soldier, ready to fight for his country.' This is the account which Voltaire gives of that country. Since that time, it has fallen by a power greater than its own, and paid with its liberty for the folly and madness of the rest of Europe. I hope I shall not offend any of the sycophants of power, any of the enlightened patriots of the day who regard the general distinctions of liberty and slavery as slight and evanescent, by adding to my list of political grievances foreign conquest as an evil, and an evil that tends to no certain good.—I would fain know from the adepts in the science of population whether according to that system it would be an advantage to this country to be conquered by the French. The necessary ratios of the increase of food and population (which according to our author are every thing,—he utterly rejects the idea that established governments can do any mischief) would of course remain the same; and as to the practical part, population would, if any thing, go on slower than before. I cannot but think

however that most of my readers would in such a case anticipate the consequences which our political reformer describes in his croaking old-fashioned way as proceeding from another cause, the corruption of the people, and the abuses of government at home. 'I see' he says, 'my wretched country in the same condition as France is now.' [This was written at a time when it was the fashion for the English to reproach all other countries for their misery and slavery, as they have since been in the habit of hunting them down for their attempts at liberty.] 'Instead of the rich and thriving farmers, who now fill or who lately filled, the country with agriculture, yielding plenty for man and beast, I see the lands neglected, the villages and farms in ruins, with here and there a starveling in wooden shoes, driving his plough, his team consisting of an old goat, a hide-bound bullock, and an ass, value in all forty shillings. I see the once rich and populous cities of England in the same condition with those of Spain; whole streets lying in rubbish, and the grass peeping out between the stones in those which continue still inhabited. I see the harbours empty, the warehouses shut up, and the shop-keepers playing at draughts, for want of customers. I see our noble and spacious turnpike roads covered with thistles and other weeds, and hardly to be traced out. I see the studious men reading the Political Disquisitions, and the histories of the eighteenth century, and execrating the stupidity of their fathers, who in spite of the many faithful warnings given them, sat still, and suffered their country to be ruined by a set of wretches, whom they could have crushed. I see the country devoured by an army of 200,000 men. I see justice trodden under foot in the courts of justice. I see *Magna Charta*, the *Habeas Corpus* act, the bill of rights, and trial by jury, obsolete, and royal edicts and *arrets* set up in their place. I see the once respectable land-owners, tradesmen, and manufacturers of England sunk into contempt, and place-men and military officers the only persons of consequence, &c.' I do not know but there may be some staunch adherents to the new philosophy, some hyper-graduates in the school, who would think such a state of things 'a consummation devoutly to be wished.' But it is happy that where our reason leaves us, our prejudices often come to our aid. Though there may be some persons in this country who would not care a fig for the Bastile, or letters *de cachet*, there is no one who has not a just dread of Buonaparte; or who would not indignantly spurn at the wretch who told him that so long as the disproportion in the increase of food and the increase of mankind continued, it was of little consequence to him whether he was subject to the yoke of a foreign tyrant, or governed by a mild and lawful sovereign.—It has always been the custom for the English to extol

themselves to the skies as the freest and happiest nation on the face of the earth. Ever since I was a boy, I remember to have heard of the trial by jury, Magna Charta, and the bill of rights, of the Bastile in France, and the Inquisition in Spain, and the man in the Iron mask. Now whether it is that I was a boy when I first heard of these things, or that they carry some weight and meaning in themselves, certain it is that they have made such a strong and indelible impression on my mind as totally to preclude the effects of Mr. Malthus's philosophy. Whether it is owing to the strength of my reason or my prejudices, I cannot receive the benefit of his new light. As these are some of the strongest feelings I have, (though they may perhaps be just as childish as those which I still have in reading the story of Goody Two-Shoes, or the Little Red Riding-hood) it occurred to me to make some use of them in answer to Mr. Malthus's challenge to shew that there is no difference between one government and another in the essentials of liberty and happiness. Or I thought I might contrast the constitution of this country with that of Denmark, where (says Lord Molesworth) the peasants are as absolute slaves as the negroes in Jamaica, and *worse fed*. This seemed to be strong ground. But then I recollected that the very same expression had been applied by a person, whom it would be unbecoming in me to contradict, to the peasants in this country.[1] I also met with a passage something to the same purpose in the Political Disquisitions, which a little damped my patriotic eagerness. 'A poor hard-working man, who has a wife and six children to maintain' [what a wicked wretch!] 'can neither enjoy the glorious light of heaven, nor the glimmering of a farthing candle, without paying the window tax and the candle tax. He rises early and sits up late; he fills the whole day with severe labour; he goes to his flock-bed with half a belly-full of bread and cheese denying the call of natural appetite, that his wife and little starvelings may have the more.' [Why he is very justly punished to be sure. True; but mark the sequel.] 'In the mean while the exactors of these taxes are revelling at the expence of more money for one evening's amusement, than the wretched hard-working man (who is obliged to find the money for them to squander) can earn by half a year's severe labour.' On the whole, I was obliged to relinquish my

[1] See the ingenious and elegant defence of the Slave-Trade, attributed in the newspapers to his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence. There is a magnanimity and noble ingenuousness in the avowal of such a sentiment, which can only be expected from those, who from the elevated superiority of their situation can look down with contempt on the opinion of mankind, and the vulgar notions of decency and order.

project. I found that my picture must either want effect, or be out of all keeping. And besides the relations of things had not only changed, but men's opinions had changed with them. An over-charged description of English liberty and continental slavery would not be at all to the taste of the times. It would sound like mere rant, and would come to nothing. But when I came to that fine representation of the effects of slavery, which Burgh has left us, with those exquisite figures of the old goat, the bullock and the ass, and the group of shop-keepers playing at draughts for want of something to do, I was determined to bring it in, cost what it would. At last, I bethought me of the expedient of an invasion,—at that word I knew that every true friend of his country would grow pale, would see the odious consequences of slavery in their native deformity, and turn with disdain from those vile panders to vice and misery, those sanguine enthusiasts of mischief, who would artfully reconcile them to every species of want, oppression, and unfeeling barbarity, as the necessary consequences of the principle of population. So much more credit do we attach to names, than things!—The whole of the account of Denmark to which I have just referred, is well worthy of attention: I cannot forbear giving the following extract. 'The consequence of this oppression is that the people of Denmark finding it impossible to secure their property' [from the tax-gatherers] 'squander their little gettings, as fast as they can, and are irremediably poor. Oppression and arbitrary sway beget distrust and doubts about the security of property; doubts beget profusion, men chusing to squander on their pleasures what they apprehend may excite the rapaciousness of their superiors; and this profusion is the legitimate parent of that universal indolence, poverty and despondency, which so strongly characterize the miserable inhabitants of Denmark. When Lord Molesworth resided in that country, the collectors of the poll-tax were obliged to accept of old feather-beds, brass and pewter pans, &c. instead of money, from the inhabitants of a town, which once raised 200,000 rix dollars for Christiern IV. on twenty-four hours' notice. The quartering and paying the king's troops is another grievance no less oppressive. The boors are obliged to furnish the king and every little insolent courtier with horses and waggons in their journeys, and are beaten like cattle. Consequently, Denmark, once very populous, is become thin of inhabitants; as poverty, oppression, and meagre diet do miserably check procreation, besides producing diseases which shorten the lives of the few who are born.' [How miserably short-sighted must our author have been not to perceive that these were great advantages!] 'All this the rich and thriving and free people of England may bring themselves to, if they

please' [by following up Mr. Malthus's theory.] 'It is only letting the court go on with their scheme of diffusing universal corruption through all ranks, and it will come of course.'—There is one passage in this account, which malevolence itself cannot apply to the history of this country. 'Before the government of Denmark was made hereditary and absolute in the present royal family, by that fatal measure in 1660, the nobility lived in great splendour and affluence. *Now they are poor and their number diminished.*'

I shall conclude these extracts with the following passages, taken at random, which will at least serve to shew the strange prejudices that prevailed on the subject, before Mr. Malthus, like the clown in Shakespear, undertook to find out an answer that should explain all difficulties. 'It must indeed be an answer of most monstrous size that fits all demands.' But perhaps Mr. Malthus is by this time convinced, that 'a thing may serve long, and not serve ever.'

'The richest soil in Europe, Italy, is full of beggars; among the Grisons, the poorest country in Europe, there are no beggars. The bailage of Lugane is the worst country, the least productive, the most exposed to cold and the least capable of trade of any in all Italy, and yet is the best peopled. If ever this country is brought under a yoke like that which the rest of Italy bears, it will soon be abandoned, for nothing draws so many people to live in so bad a soil, when they are in sight of the best soil in Europe, but the easiness of the government.' Burnet's Travels.

'Italy shews, in a very striking light, the advantages of free government.[1] The subjects of the Italian republics are thriving and happy. Those under the Pope, the dukes of Tuscany, Florence &c. wretched in the extreme.—Lucca, to mention no other, is a remarkable instance of the happy effects of liberty. The whole dominion is but thirty miles round, yet contains, besides the city, 150 villages, 120,000 inhabitants, and all the soil is cultivated to the utmost. Their magistrates are re-elected every two months out of a body of nobility, who are chosen every two years.' Modern Universal History. See also A. Sydney as before quoted.—These differences cannot be accounted for by the length of time or the force with which the principle of population has operated in these states. The countries are equally old, and the climate very nearly the same.

'In England an industrious subject has the best chance for thriving, because the country is the freest. In the Mogul's

[1] Mr. Malthus, for what reason I know not, in his account of the state of population in the different countries of modern Europe, has declined giving any account of the state of population in Italy.

dominions the worst, because the country is the most effectually enslaved.'

'The title of freemen was formerly confined chiefly to the nobility and gentry, who were descended of free ancestors. *For the greatest part of the people* was restrained under some species of slavery, so that they were not their own masters.' Spelman's Glossary.[1]—On this passage my author remarks very gravely, 'What has been in England may be again. If liberty be on the decline, no one knows how low it may sink, and to what pitch of slavery and cruelty it may grow.' Mr. Malthus's theory tends to familiarise the mind to such a change as the necessary effect of the progress of population. But this pretext is here clearly done away, as we have fought up to our present free, and flourishing state, in the *teeth* of this principle. Our progress has not been uniformly *retrograde*, as it ought to have been to make any thing of the argument.

'It is constantly (said a member in Queen Elizabeth's time) in the mouths of us all, that our lands, goods and laws are at our prince's disposal.' We do not at present come *quite* up to the loyalty of this speaker.

'Nations have often been deceived into slavery by men of shining abilities.' Perhaps the late Mr. Burke was an instance of this. I by no means insist that he was, because there may be differences of opinion on that point. But of this I am sure, that the effect of his writings, good or bad, cannot be measured—by the principle of population.

'A single genius changes the face and state of a whole country, as Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, and Peter the great of Russia. Confucius produced a reformation in one of the oriental kingdoms in a few months.'

'Commerce introduced by the czar Peter introduced luxury. Universal dissipation took the lead, and profligacy of manners succeeded. *Many of the lords began to squeeze and grind the peasants*

[1] Among other instances it is mentioned, that every vassal was obliged to give the first night of his bride to the lord of the manor, if he demanded it. It is hard to be sure for a man to be cuckolded the very first night of his marriage. But even at present, though the formality of the thing is abolished, there are very few husbands who are not tolerably cerain of being cuckolded by the first lord, or duke, who thinks it worth his while to attempt it. It is some consolation to us poor devils of authors, that we have no chance of getting a wife who is at all likely to meet with any such distinction. But if I were a snug tradesman or city-merchant, and had bargained for a sweet girl whose smile was Elysium, whose air was enchantment, and her looks all love,—I should be terribly afraid of the cocked hats at the opera. I should tremble at every coronet coach that passed the door, and should run mad at the sight of a prince's feather.

to extort fresh supplies from them for the incessant demands of luxury'— not of population.

'The extreme poverty occasioned by idleness and luxury in the beginning of Lewis XIII. of France filled the streets of Paris with beggars. The court disgusted at the sight, which indeed was a severe reproach on them, issued an order, forbidding all persons, on severe penalties, to relieve them, intending thereby to drive them out of the town, and not caring though they dropped down dead, before they could reach the country towns and villages.' This was a project worthy of the genius of Mr. Malthus.

'Government, according to Plato, is the parent of manners. One judicious regulation will often produce a very salutary effect on a whole people, as experimental philosophy shews us, that a wire will secure a castle from the once irresistible force of lightning.—Mankind may be brought to hold any principles and to indulge any practices, and again to give them up.—Is there any notion of right and wrong, about which mankind are universally agreed? Is it not evident that mankind may be moulded into any shape? How come we to know that antimony or quicksilver may, by chemical processes, be made to pass through twenty different states, and restored again to their original state? Is it not by experiment? Are not the various legislations, institutions, regulations of wise or designing statesmen, priests, and kings, a series of experiments, shewing that human nature is susceptible of any form or character?' According to the most modern discovery, these things never did, nor ever will have any effect at all. The question is simply whether the state of food and the state of population being the same, the different causes here alluded to have not produced very different results with respect to the degree both of vice and misery existing in the world.[1]

'The great difference we see between the behaviour of the people called Quakers, and all others; between English, Scotch, Irish, French, Spanish, Heathens, Mahometan, Christian, Popish, Protestant manners and characters, &c. the regular and permanent difference we see between the manners of all these divisions of mankind, shews beyond all doubt that the principles and habits of the people are very much in the power of able statesmen.'

'Among the Lacedemonians there was no such crime as infidelity to the marriage-bed: yet Lycurgus in framing his laws had used no precaution against it, but the virtuous and temperate education he prescribed for the youth of both sexes.—The influence which education has on

[1] Even this is making a very large concession to Mr. Malthus. The real points to be given are the possible power of productiveness in the earth and the necessary tendency of population to increase.

the manners of a people is so considerable that it cannot be estimated. But by *education* it is to be observed, we must understand not only what is taught at schools and universities, but the impressions young people receive from parents, and from the world, which greatly outweigh all that can be done by masters and tutors. Education, taken in this enlarged sense, is almost all that makes the difference between the characters of nations; and it is a severe satire on our times, *that the world makes most young men very different beings from what those who educated them intended them to be.*' This last remark is I think of the utmost force and importance; and has never been sufficiently attended to by those who prate most fluently and triumphantly about the inherent perversity of human nature. A young man is seldom tainted by the world, till he becomes dependent on it. I have known several persons who I am sure have set out in life with the utmost purity of intention, and a noble ingenuousness of mind, and were prepared to act on very different principles from those, which they found prevailing in the world. Is the fault in this case in the wood, or in the carver? Is it in the stuff, or in the mould, in which it is cast? The difficulty seems to be, how to get a better mould.

'Aristotle lays down very strict rules concerning the company young people may be allowed to keep, the public diversions they may attend; the pictures they may see, and against obscenity, intemperance, &c. And the eighth book of his politics is employed wholly on education, in which he shews, that youth ought to be strongly impressed with the idea of their being members of a community, whose good they are to prefer to their private advantage in all cases where they come in competition. He commends the wisdom of the Spartans in paying such attention to this great object. Such is the delicacy of this old Heathen, that he hesitates about the propriety of young men's applying to music, as being likely to enervate the mind.'

'Lycurgus did not allow the Spartans to travel, lest they should be tainted by the manners of other nations.' I do not chuse to name all the vices that have been imported into this country within the last fifty years by the aid of foreign travel. Vice is unfortunately of a very tenacious quality, and there is no quarantine against the epidemics of the mind. In return, however, we have learned to converse, to dress, and dance better than we used to do.

'At Sparta, the poets could not publish any thing without a license; and all immoral writings were prohibited. A very wise man [1] said he believed, if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who made the laws of a nation. The ancient legislators did

[1] Fletcher of Saltoun.

not pretend to reform the manners of the people without the help of the poets.'

'The grave Romans did not allow a person of character to dance! It was a saying among them, no one dances unless he is drunk or mad.'

'In the old English laws, we find punishments for wanton behaviour, as touching the breasts of women, &c.—By the ancient laws of France, the least indecency of behaviour to a free woman, as squeezing the hand, touching the arm or breast, &c. was punishable by fire.'[1] What odd, sour, crabbed notions must have prevailed in those days! Not squeeze a lady's hand! No—a much more agreeable latitude of behaviour is allowed at present: we are as much improved in our notions of gallantry as of liberty. The polite reader will not suspect me of a design to hold up the shocking manners of our ancestors as models of imitation in the present day; I only mention them to shew what a wide difference there may be in the notions of decency and propriety at different times!

If a stranger, on entering a large town, London for example, should be struck with that immense number of prostitutes, 'who elbow us aside in all our crowded streets,' and not well knowing how to account for this enormous abuse, should apply to a disciple of the modern school for some explanation of it, he would probably be told with great gravity, *That it was a necessary consequence of the progress of population, and the superior power of that principle over the increase in the means of subsistence.*—If Mr. Malthus, contented to follow in the track of common sense, and not smitten with the love of dangerous novelty, had endeavoured to trace the torrent of vice and dissipation which threatens to bear down every principle of virtue and decency among us to the chief sources pointed out by other writers, to the particular institutions of society, to the prevalence of luxury, the inequality of conditions, the facility of gratifying the passions from the power of offering temptation, and inducements to accept it, the disproportion between the passions excited in individuals, and their situation in life, to books, to education, the progress of arts, the influence of neighbouring example, &c. these are all causes, which, as they are arbitrary and variable, seem as if they could be counteracted or modified by other causes; they are the work of man, and what is the work of man it seems in the power of man to confirm or alter. We see distinctly the source of the grievance, and try to remedy it: hope remains, the will acts with double energy, the spirit of virtue is not broken. Our vices grow out of other vices, out of our own passions, prejudices, folly, and weakness: there is nothing in this to make us proud of them, or to reconcile us to them; even though we

[1] Spelman's Glossary.

may despair, we are not confounded. We still have the theory of virtue left: we are not obliged to give up the distinction between good and evil even in imagination: there is some little good which we may at least wish to do. Man in this case retains the character of a free agent; he stands chargeable with his own conduct, and a sense of the consequences of his own presumption or blindness may arouse in him feelings that may in some measure counteract their worst effects; he may regret what he cannot help: the life, the pulse, the spring of morality is not dead in him; his moral sense is not quite extinguished. But our author has chosen to stagger the minds of his readers by representing vice and misery as the necessary consequences of an abstract principle, of a fundamental law of our nature, on which nothing can be effected by the human will. This principle follows us wherever we go; if we fly into the uttermost parts of the earth, it is there: whether we turn to the right or the left, we cannot escape from it. O rather for that warning voice, that once cried aloud, *Insenses qui vous plaignez sans cesse de la nature, apprenez que tous vos maux vous viennent de vous!* As however I deny the sufficiency of our author's all-pervading principle, I may be required to point out more particularly what I conceive to be the real and determining causes of the decay of manners. I do not know that I can mention any that do not come under the heads already alluded to, but if I must give a short answer, I should say,—Great towns, great schools, dress, and novels. These things are not regulated exactly by the size of the earth, and yet must be allowed to have some influence on manners. To instance only the two last. Is it to be wondered at that a young raw ignorant girl, who is sent up from the country as a milliner's or mantua-maker's apprentice, and stowed into a room with eight or ten others, who snatch every moment they can spare from caps and bonnets, and sit up half the night to read all the novels they can get, and as soon they have finished one, send for another, whose heart, in the course of half a year, has been pierced through with twenty beaux on paper, who has been courted, seduced, run away with, married and put to bed under all the fine names that the imagination can invent to as many fine gentlemen, who has sighed and wept with so many heroes and heroines that her tears and sighs have at last caused in her a defluction of the brain, and a palpitation of the heart at the sight of every man, whose fancy is love-sick, and her head quite turned, should be unable to resist the first coxcomb of real flesh and blood, who in shining boots and a velvet collar accosts her in the shape of a lover, but who has no thoughts of marrying her, because if he were to take this imprudent step, he must give up his shining boots and velvet collar,

and the respect they procure him in the world? Zaleucus ordained that no woman should dress herself gorgeously, unless she was a prostitute. If I were a law-giver, and chose to meddle in such matters, I would ordain that no woman should expose her shape publicly, unless she were a prostitute.—The female form is more proper for child-bearing, than for public exhibition; this secret analogy, when coupled with modesty and reserve, is however its greatest charm. The strange fancy-dresses, the perverse disguises, the counterfeit shapes, the stiff stays, and enormous hoops worn by the women in the time of the Spectator gave an agreeable scope to the imagination. The greedy eye and rash hand of licentiousness were repressed. The senses were never satisfied in an instant. Love was entangled in the folds of the swelling handkerchief, and the desires might wander for ever round the circumference of a quilted petticoat, or find a rich lodging in the flowers of a damask stomacher. There was room for years of patient perseverance, for a thousand thoughts, fancies, conjectures, hopes, fears, and wishes. There seemed no end to difficulties and delays: to overcome so many obstacles was the work of ages. A *wife* had then some meaning in it: it was an angel concealed behind whalebone, flounces, and brocade. The transition from a mistress in masquerade to a wife in wedding sheets was worth venturing for: now it is nothing, and we hear no more of faithful courtships, and romantic loves. A woman can be *but* undressed.—The young ladies we at present see with the thin muslin vest drawn tight round the slender waist, and following with nice exactness the undulations of the shape downwards, disclosing each full swell, each coy recess, obtruding on the eye each opening charm, the play of the muscles, the working of the thighs, and by the help of a walk, of which every step seems a gird, and which keeps the limbs strained to the utmost point, displaying all those graceful involutions of person, and all those powers of fascinating motion, of which the female form is susceptible—these moving pictures of lust and nakedness, against which the greasy imaginations of grooms and porters may rub themselves, running the gauntlet of the saucy looks and indecent sarcasms of the boys in the street, staring at every ugly fellow, leering at every handsome man, and throwing out a lure for every fool (true Spartan girls, who if they were metamorphosed into any thing in the manner of Ovid, it would certainly be into valerian!) are the very same, whose mothers or grand-mothers buried themselves under a pile of clothes, whose timid steps hardly touched the ground, whose eyes were constantly averted from the rude gaze of the men, and who almost blushed at their own shadows. 'Of such we in romances read.' It does not require any great spirit of divination to

perceive that this change in appearance must imply some change in manners. Is this change then owing entirely to the increased pressure of the principle of population, or have not French fashions, French milliners, and French dancing-masters had some hand in producing it?[1]—Mr. Malthus inveighs with great severity against squalid poverty, and the vices produced by filth and rags. I allow the justice of his remarks, and think that the condition of the poor in this respect is one of the chief nuisances of society. After giving the poor a scrubbing with a coarse towel in the manner he has done, it would not have been amiss if he had taken a clean white clerical pocket-handkerchief, and applied it to wipe off the rouge from the cheeks of painted prostitution, or thrown it as a covering over the polished neck and ivory shoulders of ladies of high quality. The bishop of London would have praised the attempt. Mr. Malthus might have distinguished between the involuntary rents, and the unlucky loop-holes which sometimes appear in a poor girl's petticoat, and the elegant dishabille and studied nakedness of high life. The dirt that sticks to a wench's face in cleaning a saucepan is I think likely to have less effect on the character than the red paste daubed on the cheeks before a looking-glass, to give *animation* to the eyes. The contempt which dirt and poverty excite must destroy all moral sensibility. Must not the glare of fashion and the perpetual intoxication of personal vanity have the same effect? The poor grovel in disagreeable sensations, the rich wanton in voluptuous ones. The passions are not more likely to be inflamed by stale porter, the screams of a fiddle, and the clattering of a hornpipe at a hop in St. Giles's, than by the elegant liqueurs, the soft sounds of the clarionet and hautboy, and the languishing movements of walses, allemandes, and minuets *de la cour* at a ball in St. James's. A fair, or an opera may equally turn the head of any silly girl that goes to one. Of the two, a tune on the salt-box would be got over sooner than Narcissus and the Graces. The tawdry prints to be seen in garrets, and the ballads sung at the corners of streets do not much improve the morals of the people: but I put it to the conscience of our sentimental divine, whether the Wanton Wife of Bath, or the tall captain with his arm round the chambermaid's waist, or Jemmy Jessamy lolling on the sofa with his mistress, may be expected to produce more accidents than those luscious collections of the poets, or those grave scripture-pieces, or classical *chef-d'œuvres* of Venus and

[1] Have Dryden's Fables, the New Eloise, or the Memoirs of Fanny Hill never added any thing to the pressure of the principle of population, without any reference to the parish registers of deaths and marriages?

Adonis, of Leda with her Swan, Nymphs, Fawns, and Satyrs, which gentlemen of fortune keep in their houses for the instruction of their wives and daughters. Mr. Malthus is convinced that no young woman brought up in nastiness and vulgarity, however virtuous she may seem, can be good for any thing at twenty: I confess I have the same cynical opinion of those, who have the good fortune to be brought up in the obscene refinements of fashionable life.

I never fell in love but once; and then it was with a girl who always wore her handkerchief pinned tight round her neck, with a fair face, gentle eyes, a soft smile, and cool auburn locks. I mention this, because it may in some measure account for my temperate, tractable notions of this passion, compared with Mr. Malthus's. It was not a raging heat, a fever in the veins: but it was like a vision, a dream, like thoughts of childhood, an everlasting hope, a distant joy, a heaven, a world that might be. The dream is still left, and sometimes comes confusedly over me in solitude and silence, and mingles with the softness of the sky, and veils my eyes from mortal grossness. After all, Mr. Malthus may be right in his opinion of human nature. Though my notions of love have been thus aerial and refined, I do not know that this was any advantage to me, or that I might not have done better with a few of our author's ungovernable transports, and sensual oozings. Perhaps the workings of the heart are best expressed by a gloating countenance, by mawkish sentiments and lively gestures. Cupid often perches on broad shoulders, or on the brawny calf of a leg, a settlement is better than a love-letter, and in love not minds, but bodies and fortunes meet. I have therefore half a mind to retract all that I have said, and prove to Mr. Malthus that love is not even so intellectual a passion as he sometimes admits it to be, but altogether gross and corporal.

I have thus attempted to answer the different points of Mr. Malthus's argument, and give a truer account of the various principles that actuate human nature. There is but one advantage that I can conceive of as resulting from the admission of his mechanical theory on the subject, which is that it would be the most effectual recipe for indifference that has yet been found out. No one need give himself any farther trouble about the progress of vice, or the extension of misery. The office of moral censor, that troublesome, uneasy office which every one is so ready to set up in his own breast, and which I verily believe is the occasion of more unhappiness than any one cause else, would be at an end. The professor's chair of morality would become vacant, and no one would have more cause than I to rejoice at the breaking up for the holidays; for I have plagued myself a good deal about the distinctions of right and wrong. The pilot might let go the helm,

and leave the vessel to drift carelessly before the stream. When we are once convinced that the degree of virtue and happiness can no more be influenced by human wisdom than the ebbing and flowing of the tide, it must be idle to give ourselves any more concern about them. The wise man might then enjoy an Epicurean languor and repose, without being conscious of the neglect of duty. Mr. Malthus's system is one, 'in which the wicked cease from troubling, and in which the weary are at rest.' To persons of an irritable and nervous disposition, who are fond of kicking against the pricks, who have tasted of the bitterness of the knowledge of good and evil, and to whom whatever is amiss in others sticks not merely like a burr, but like a pitch-plaister, the advantage of such a system is incalculable.—

Happy are they, who live in the dream of their own existence, and see all things in the light of their own minds; who walk by faith and hope, not by knowledge; to whom the guiding-star of their youth still shines from afar, and into whom the spirit of the world has not entered! They have not been 'hurt by the archers,' nor has the iron entered their souls. They live in the midst of arrows, and of death, unconscious of harm. The evil thing comes not nigh them. The shafts of ridicule pass unheeded by, and malice loses its sting. Their keen perceptions do not catch at hidden mischiefs, nor cling to every folly. The example of vice does not rankle in their breasts, like the poisoned shirt of Nessus. Evil impressions fall off from them, like drops of water. The yoke of life is to them light and supportable. The world has no hold on them. They are in it, not of it; and a dream and a glory is ever about them.

EXTRACTS FROM THE ESSAY ON POPULATION

WITH A COMMENTARY, AND NOTES

I INTENDED to have added another Letter on the principle of population as affecting the laws of property, and the condition of the poor. But I found it impossible to combat some of Mr. Malthus's opinions without bringing vouchers for them. I might otherwise seem to be combating the chimeras of my own brain. There are some instances of perverse reasoning so gross and mischievous, that without seeing the confidence with which they are insisted on, it seems a waste of time to contradict them. The reader may perhaps have had something of this feeling already. By throwing the remainder of the work into the form of Extracts with notes I shall at least avoid the imputation of ascribing to Mr. Malthus singularities he never dreamt of, and have an opportunity of remarking upon some incidental passages, which appeared to me liable to objection in the perusal. My remarks will be confined almost entirely to the two last books of the work.

'M. Condorcet's *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progres de l'esprit humain*, was written, it is said, under the pressure of that cruel proscription which terminated in his death. If he had no hopes of its being seen during his life, and of its interesting France in his favour, it is a singular instance of the attachment of a man to principles, which every day's experience was, so fatally for himself, contradicting. To see the human mind, in one of the most enlightened nations of the world, debased by such a fermentation of disgusting passions, of fear, cruelty, malice, revenge, ambition, madness, and folly, as would have disgraced the most savage nations in the most barbarous age, must have been such a tremendous shock to his ideas of the necessary and inevitable progress of the human mind, that nothing but the firmest conviction of the truth of his principles, in spite of all appearances, could have withstood.'

Mr. Malthus in his pick-thank way, here takes occasion to sneer at Condorcet for his attachment to principles, which, he asserts, every day's experience was contradicting. As this of mine is not a pick-thank work, I must take the liberty of observing, as I have never read M. Condorcet's work, that if his ideas of the future progress of the human mind were the same as those of other writers on the subject, that debasement of character, and that mass of disgusting passions, which developed themselves in the events to which Mr. Malthus here alludes, were the strongest confirmation of the necessity of getting rid of those institutions which had thus degraded the human character, and under which such passions had been fostered: for to say that the progress of the human mind, in spite of those institutions, was necessary and inevitable, or that there were no such passions as fear, cruelty, malice, revenge, &c. belonging to the character generated by the old system in France (in which an immediate change could not be expected without a miracle) would have been such a contradiction to common sense, and to all their own favourite schemes of reform, as no madman in the height of revolutionary madness was ever guilty of. All that could ever be pretended by the advocates of reform was that there were capacities for improvement in the mind, which had hitherto notwithstanding the advantages of knowledge been thwarted by human institutions. The contradiction rests therefore not with Condorcet, but with our author. The same objection has been often made, and often refuted. But there are some reasoners who care little how often a fallacy has been exposed, if they know there are people who are still inclined to listen to it.

'This posthumous publication is only a sketch of a much larger work which he proposed should be executed. It necessarily wants, therefore, that detail and application, which can alone prove the truth of any theory.' [This remark I cannot admit. I do not think for instance that any detail or application is necessary to prove the truth of Mr. Malthus's general principle of the disproportion between the power of increase in population, and in the productions of the earth, or to shew the bad consequences of an unrestricted increase of population.] 'A few observations will be sufficient to shew how completely this theory is contradicted, when it is applied to the real and not to an imaginary state of things.' [The *contre-sens* implied in this expression is not a slip of the pen, but a fixed principle in Mr. Malthus's mind. He has a very satisfactory method of answering all theories relating to any imaginary alterations or improvements in the condition of mankind, by shewing what would be the consequences of a certain state of society, if no such state of society

really existed, but if every thing remained just as it is at present. He thinks it sound sense and true philosophy to judge of a theory which is confessedly imaginary or has never been realized by comparing it 'with the real and not with an imaginary state of things.' That is, he does not adopt the necessarian maxim that men will be always the same while the circumstances continue, but he insists upon it that they will be always the same, whether the circumstances are the same or not. Some instances have already appeared of this in the foregoing work. The following passage may serve as another instance. After supposing Mr. Godwin's system of equality to be realized to its utmost extent, and the most perfect form of society established, he exclaims, 'this would indeed be a happy state; but that it is merely an imaginary state with scarcely a feature near the *truth*, the reader, I am afraid, is already too well convinced.' Mr. Godwin himself was I apprehend very well convinced that this imaginary state was very different from the truth or from the present state of things, when he wrote his book to shew how much better the one *would be* than the other *is*. He then goes on, 'Man cannot live in the midst of plenty. All cannot share alike the bounties of nature. Were there no established administration of property, every man would be obliged to guard with force his little store. Selfishness would be triumphant. The subjects of contention would be perpetual,' &c. If there were no established administration of property, while men continued as selfish as they are at present, (which is I suppose what Mr. Malthus means by applying the theory *to the real state of things*) the consequences here mentioned would no doubt follow. But it is supposed that there is no established administration of property, because the necessity for it has ceased or because selfishness is not triumphant, but vanquished. This is the supposition. Mr. Malthus however persists, that were there no established administration of property, 'every man would be obliged to guard with force his little store since selfishness would still be as triumphant as ever.' This is contrary to all the received rules of reasoning. He then proceeds to examine, how long Mr. Godwin's theory if once realized might be expected to last, and how soon the present vices of men would discompose this *perfect* form of society, concluding very wisely that 'a theory that will not admit of application cannot possibly be just.' True: if a man tells you that a triangle has certain properties, he is bound to make good this theory with respect to a triangle, but not with respect to a circle.—The outcry which Mr. Malthus here makes about experience is without any meaning. It is evident that we cannot make this word a rule in all cases whatever. For instance, if a man who is in the habit of drinking a bottle

of brandy every day of his life and consequently enjoys but an indifferent state of health, is advised by his physician to leave off this practice, and told that *on this condition* he may recover his health and appetite, it would not be considered as a proof of any great wisdom in the man, if he were to answer this reasoning of his physician by applying it to the real, and not to an imaginary state of things, or by saying, 'The consequences you promise me from submitting to your regimen are indeed very desirable; but I cannot expect any such consequences from it: I have always been in very bad health from the habit I have constantly been in of drinking brandy; and it would be contrary to the experience of my whole life to suppose, that I should receive any benefit from leaving it off.' In like manner, I conceive that it is not from any great depth of philosophy, but from the strength of his attachment to the good things of this life, that Mr. Malthus makes so many ill-judged appeals to experience. He is afraid of launching into the empty regions of abstraction, he stands shivering on the brink; or if he ventures a little way, soon turns back again, frightened out of his wits, and muttering something about population. His imagination cannot sustain for a moment the idea of any real improvement or elevation in the human character, but instantly drops down into the filth of vice and misery, out of which it had just crawled. His attempts at philosophy put me in mind of the exploits of those citizens who set out on a Sunday morning to take an excursion into the country, resolved to taste the fresh air, and not be confined for ever to the same spot, but who get no farther than Paddington, White Conduit-house, or Bagnigge-wells, unable to leave the smoke, the noise and dust, to which they have so long been used! Mr. Malthus is a perfect *cockney* in matters of philosophy.

M. Condorcet, allowing that there must in all stages of society be a number of individuals who have no other resource than their industry, or that 'there exists a necessary cause of inequality, of dependence and even of misery,[1] which menaces without ceasing the most numerous and active class of the community,' proposes to establish a fund, which should assure to the old an assistance, produced in part *by their own former savings*, and partly by the savings of others, who die before they reap the benefit of it; and that this fund might extend to women and children, who had lost their husbands or fathers, and afford a capital to young beginners, sufficient for the developement of their industry. To those who have not fathomed all the depths and shoals of the principle of population,

[1] Mr. M. always translates the word *misere* or want misery, and has adopted it as the burthen of his song. He has made a very significant use of this equivoque in many parts of his work.

this plan seems feasible enough. Mr. Malthus's cautious reserved humanity, his anxious concern about the support of the aged, the infirm, the widow, and the orphan, his wish to give every encouragement to industry, and above all, his regard for the rights and independence of his fellows, lead him to see nothing but difficulties and objections in the way of such a plan.

'Such establishments may appear very promising upon paper; but when applied to real life, they will be found to be absolutely nugatory. M. Condorcet allows, that a class of people which maintains itself entirely by industry is necessary to every state. Why does he allow this? No other reason can well be assigned, than because he conceives, that the labour necessary to procure subsistence for an extended population, will not be performed without the goad of necessity. If by establishments, upon the plans that have been mentioned, this spur to industry be removed; if the idle and negligent be placed upon the same footing with regard to their credit, and the future support of their wives and families, as the active and industrious, can we expect to see men exert that animated activity in bettering their condition, which now forms the master-spring of publick prosperity. If an inquisition were to be established to examine the claims of each individual, and to determine whether he had, or had not, exerted himself to the utmost, and to grant or refuse assistance accordingly, this would be little else than a repetition upon a larger scale, of the English poor laws, and would be completely destructive of the true principles of liberty and equality.'

This passage only shews the shyness of our author's benevolence. He will hear of no short-cuts or obvious expedients for bettering the condition of the poor. All his benefits are extracted by the Cæsarean operation.—In the first place, he contradicts himself. He first supposes that labour cannot be performed without the *goad of necessity*, and then affirms that it is *the prospect of bettering their condition*, that makes men exert themselves, and forms the master-spring of public prosperity. But why is it necessary that the idle and negligent should be put upon the same footing with the industrious, with respect to their credit, the support of their families, &c.? As to the first of these, it is proposed to be only temporary, to serve as a beginning, and if a proper use is not made of it, the goad of necessity, to which Mr. Malthus is so ready to resort on all occasions, will soon begin to do its office. As to the second object, the support of a surviving family, in case of accidents, did Mr. Malthus never hear of any distress produced in this way, but in consequence of the idleness and negligence of the deceased? Is not a poor family necessarily reduced to distress by the death of the husband, let his industry and sobriety

have been never so great, and even reduced to greater distress in proportion to his industry, as they must miss his help the more? Besides, it is not likely that the witholding this assistance from a man's family after his death will be any inducement to the idle and negligent to exert themselves, when the sight of the actual distress in which their families are involved by their ill conduct has no effect upon them. I see no objection to proportioning the allowance to the old, or to those who have had time to make a provision for themselves, to the contributions they have really made to the fund in a given length of time. This would be a sufficient test of the validity of their pretensions, as they could not contribute largely, without proportionably straitening themselves, and the idle and profligate are not very apt to part with their present gains to provide for any speculative uncertainties or future difficulty. (Mr. Malthus may measure the support allotted to their families in the same way.) While the distinction of the idle and industrious continued, and while it was necessary to encourage the one and discountenance the other, I do not understand what objection there can be to this mode, or how it would trench upon the true principles of liberty and equality. True equality supposes equal merit and virtue. But Mr. Malthus is alarmed at this scheme, because, he says, it is little else than a repetition on a larger scale of the English poor laws. If the English poor laws are formed upon this principle, I should, I confess, be very sorry to see them abolished.

'Were every man sure of a comfortable provision for a family, almost every man would have one; and were the rising generation free from the "killing frost" of misery, population must increase with unusual rapidity.'

This is an utter falsification of the argument, as I have already shewn. Every man could not be sure of a comfortable provision for a family, unless this provision existed, and I see no reason why the rising generation should not be free from the killing frost of misery, at least while they can. To argue that our enlightened posterity will feel 'secure that the general benevolence will supply every deficiency,' is to suppose them strangely unacquainted with the principles of Mr. Malthus's Essay.

'The period when the number of men surpass their means of subsistence has long since arrived.' p. 357.

This I must deny. That the period of the utmost degree of populousness would have arrived long ago, if nothing had prevented it, I am very ready to grant. But that it has ever actually arrived, is another question. Because population would have arrived at its greatest possible or desirable height long before our time, if it had not

been kept back by any artificial and arbitrary checks, is that any reason why it should never attain that height, or should not now be suffered to go on, though those checks have always operated to keep it back much more than was necessary, viz. below the level not only of the possible, but of the *actual* means of subsistence or produce of the earth? As to the period when the world is likely to maintain the greatest possible number of inhabitants in the greatest possible comfort, I have no notion that it will ever arrive at all. If however it should ever arrive, it must be in consequence either of a gradual or immediate complete improvement in the state of society. If this improvement is gradual, the increase in population will be so too, and will not reach its farthest limit till a considerably remote period; if the improvement is sudden and rapid, still it must be some time before the operation of the new system of things will have overcome all obstacles, and completely peopled the earth. So that in either case the event seems a good way off. The danger of arriving at this point does not therefore appear to be 'immediate or imminent,' but doubtful and distant.

Mr. Malthus in his examination of Condorcet's arguments, in favour of the indefinite prolongation of human life, (one of those absurdities against which no good reason can be given, but that it shocks all common sense) shews considerable ingenuity, mixed up with a great deal of that minute verbal logic, to which he seems to have accustomed his mind, and which is perpetually leading him into erroneous methods of reasoning, even when he happens to be right in his conclusions. As in the following passages.

'Variations from different causes are essentially distinct from a regular and unretrograde increase. The average duration of human life will, to a certain degree, vary, from healthy or unhealthy climates, from wholesome or unwholesome food, from virtuous or vicious manners, and other causes; but it may be fairly doubted, whether there has been really the smallest perceptible advance in the natural duration of human life, since first we had any authentic history of man. The prejudices of all ages have, indeed, been directly contrary to this supposition.'

Now this statement is very unsatisfactory, to say the least. For the only reason that can be given why the causes here mentioned, on which Mr. M. allows that the duration of human life depends, have not produced a regular and permanent effect *must be*, that they themselves have neither been regular nor permanent. The mere fact, therefore, of the variableness in the length of human life proves nothing but the variableness of those moral and artificial causes, which are supposed to have some influence on our physical constitution.

But Condorcet supposes a regular advance to be made in these causes, and that an indefinite advance in some of them (as the knowledge of medicine for instance) is probable, will hardly be disputed. The question (in this point of view) of the necessary duration of human life is not properly a question of fact, or history, but depends on a comparison of the present circumstances of mankind with their past circumstances, and on the probability that may thence appear of preventing or counteracting those maladies and passions which are most unfavourable to long life. That our reason may sometimes get the start of our experience is what no one can deny. Thus when the art of printing was first discovered it required no great stretch of thought to perceive that knowledge and learning would soon become more generally diffused than they had hitherto been, though till this event no perceptible or regular progress had ever been made. Those who reason otherwise are a kind of stereographic reasoners who take things in the lump without being able to analyse or connect their different principles. Experience is but the alphabet of reason. With respect to the general shortness of human life compared with what it was in the first ages of mankind, this fact seems rather against Mr. Malthus, for if there is no certain date, no settled period to human life, beyond which it cannot hold out, but that it has varied from a thousand to a hundred years, so far there is no reason why we should not tread back our steps, or even go beyond the point from which we set out. There is no fixed limit; the present length of human life is not evidently a general law of nature. The mere naked fact of its never exceeding a certain length at present is just as decisive against its ever having been longer, as it is against its ever being longer in future. Mr. Malthus argues about human life, as Hume argues about miracles.

'It will be said, perhaps, that the reason why plants and animals cannot increase indefinitely in size, is, that they would fall by their own weight. I answer, how do we know this but from experience? from experience of the degree of strength with which these bodies are formed. I know that a carnation, long before it reached the size of a cabbage, would not be supported by its stalk; but I only know this from my experience of the weakness, and want of tenacity in the materials of a carnation stalk. There are many substances in nature, of the same size, that would support as large a head as a cabbage.

'The reasons of the mortality of plants are at present perfectly unknown to us. No man can say why such a plant is annual, another biennial, and another endures for ages. The whole affair in all these cases, in plants, animals, and in the human race, is an affair of experience; and I only conclude that man is mortal, because the

invariable experience of all ages has proved the mortality of those materials of which his visible body is made.

'What can we reason but from what we know.'

This is making use of words without ideas. It is endeavouring to confound two things essentially distinct, because the same lax expression may be applied to them both. It is an attempt to deprive men of their understanding, and leave them nothing but the use of their senses, by a trick of language. Does it follow because all our knowledge may be traced in some way to something which may be called *experience*, that all our conclusions are nothing but an affair of memory? Does Mr. Malthus know of only one sort of experience? Is there not a blind and a rational experience? Is it not one thing merely to know a fact, or a number of facts, and another to know the *reason* of them? Or if our philosopher is determined to intrench himself behind a word, is there not a knowledge founded on the experience of certain positive results, (which often extends no further than those results) and a knowledge founded on the experience of certain general principles or laws, to which all particular effects are subject? Mr. Malthus seems to insinuate that the knowledge of the general law or principle adds nothing to the knowledge of the fact, because both are equally an affair of experience. He might as well assert that a ligature of iron would not strengthen a deal plank, because they are both held together by the same law of cohesion. The fact expresses nothing more than the actual co-existence of certain things in certain circumstances, and while all those circumstances continue, no doubt the same consequences will follow. But we know that they are hardly ever the same, and the question is, which of them is necessary to produce the effect talked of. This the *reason* points out, that is, it points out a relation between certain things, which has been found to hold not merely in the given circumstances, but in all others, which is properly the relation of cause and effect. Our idea of cause and effect is not derived from our immediate but from our *comparative* experience: it is only by taking our experience to pieces, by seeing what things are, or are not necessarily connected together in different circumstances, that we learn to reason with clearness and confidence on the succession of events.

The succession of events is not the same thing as the succession of cause and effect. By assigning a reason for a thing, I mean then being able to refer it to a general rule or principle collected from and proved by an infinite number of collateral instances, and confirming the particular fact or instance to which it is applied. It is drawing

together the different ramifications of our experience, and winding them round a particular bundle of things, and tying them fast together. Thus suppose we have never seen a carnation of the size of a cabbage: does it follow that we never shall, or that there can be no such thing? We might say, I know no *reason* why a flower of a certain shape, colour, &c. should not reach a certain size, but that it has never been so within my knowledge. This might however be owing to the soil, culture, or a thousand circumstances, which are not invariable.—But the moment the reason is given (supposing it to be a good one) namely, the connection between the contexture and weight, (though this reason is also derived indirectly from the general fund of our experience) there is an end at once of the question. To suppose a flower to grow to a greater height than it could support from the slenderness of the stalk would be to suppose what never happened not only with respect to that particular flower, the carnation, but with respect to any other flower, or plant, or animal, or any other body whatever. We know that climate has such an effect that what are plants with us, in the tropical climates become large trees: but the necessary proportion between the size or weight of the plant, and the strength of the stalk that is to support it, is what no change of soil or climate can supersede, unless we could supersede the law of gravitation itself. The mere experimental or historical proof is here then buttressed up by the general rule, or reason of the thing.—I have always seen a stone fall to the ground; I remember a house always to have stood where it does; a hill has never stirred from the place where I first saw it. Is the inference to be drawn from these different cases equally certain? Am I to conclude that the house will last as long as the mountain, because I have the same positive evidence of their permanence? No: because though I have never seen any alteration in that particular house, I have seen other houses pulled down and built up; and besides, from the size of the objects, the shape and nature of the materials, I know that one of them may be very easily destroyed, whereas nothing but some great convulsion in nature is ever likely to destroy the other or remove it from its place. Our particular experience is only to be depended on, as it is explained and confirmed by analogy to other cases, viz. by a number of other facts of the same kind, or by general observation. Secondly, the aggregate of our experience with respect to any given class of events is constantly over-ruled by the *reason of the case*, viz. by our knowledge of cause and effect, by the intelligible, explicit connections of things, and by considering whether the principles concerned in the production of a series of events, (forming a body of facts, or the concrete mass of our experience) are resolvable into a simple law

of nature operating universally, unchangeably, without ever being suspended for a moment, (as for instance, the law of gravitation which holds equally of all bodies in all cases, and can never be separated from our reasonings upon them) or whether the event has been owing to a combination of mixed causes, which do not always act alike and with equal force, or the effect of which depends upon circumstances, which we know may be altered, (as in the case of soils, climates, methods of culture,[1] &c. to return to the former example). Suppose a rock to have stood for ages on the summit of a mountain. Am I sure that it will stand there always? Yes, if nothing happens to prevent it. But can I be sure that nothing will ever remove it, because nothing has ever done so hitherto? On the contrary, I know that if a man points a cannon against it, it will be shattered to pieces in an instant, though it has stood there for ages, and though there is not at present the least appearance of a change in it. Here then my experience is of no avail against my reason. In one sense of the word, it is all thrown away, and goes for nothing. To judge rationally, I must take other circumstances into the account, the effects of gunpowder, &c. The resistance made by the rock will depend upon its hardness, not upon the length of time it had stood there. Our experience then is not one thing, or any number of things, taken absolutely or blindly by themselves, but a vast collection of facts, and what is of infinitely more importance, of rules, founded upon those facts, bearing one upon another, and perpetually modified by circumstances. It is not upon any single fact or class of facts, or on any single rule, but on the combination of all these, and the manner in which they balance and control one another, that our decisions must ultimately rest. It is from this rational and abstracted experience that we obtain any certain results, and infer from the altered relation of causes and events, that things will happen which never happened before. The future is contained in the past, only as it grows out of the same powers in nature, but acting in different situations, and producing different practical results by invariable laws. To apply all this to the question. If it is allowed that the improvements in physic have an influence on the duration of human life, and that these improvements may go on indefinitely, I do not think Mr. Malthus's answer a conclusive one that no considerable progress will ever be made in this respect, because none has hitherto been made. If the improvements in science have not hitherto been regular and permanent, it cannot be expected that any advantages depending on them should have been so: nor does the past history of mankind in this instance furnish a rule for our future conjectures, inasmuch as in

[1] The engrafting of trees might be mentioned as an instance in point.

all that relates to the permanence and general diffusion of knowledge, a new turn has been given to the question (as before observed) by the invention of printing. This single circumstance, which was matter of mere accident, may be said in many respects to have given a new aspect to human affairs; to say that it has not yet produced the effects predicted from it, when it has had no time to produce them, is like saying, that the repeated blows of a battering-ram will not break down a stone-wall, because for the two or three first blows it does not begin to move. The true question is, whether the cause is adequate to the effect ascribed to it, that is, whether its operation is of a sufficiently general and powerful nature to produce a correspondent general change in the circumstances of mankind. I think it will hardly be denied that printing may be applied with great success as an instrument for the propagation of vice: may it not then be made use of to give currency to the principles of virtue? At any rate, to deny that it is a means of diffusing and embodying knowledge is to deny that such a contrivance exists at all, or that books will be more generally read, or less liable to be lost from the facility with which they are multiplied. While therefore Mr. Malthus allows certain moral habits, and the state of physical knowledge in a great measure to determine the length of human life, he cannot object on any allowed principles of philosophy to M. Condorcet's employing these causes as intermediate links in a chain of argument to establish the probability of the gradual approach of mankind—to a state of immortality. The error does not lie in M. Condorcet's general principles of reasoning, but in the wrong application of them; though I do not know that I could detect the error better than Mr. Malthus has done. What I have endeavoured to shew in these hasty remarks is that the admission of the rule laid down by our author, that in our calculations of the future, we are to attend to nothing but the general state of the fact hitherto, without giving any weight to the actual change of collateral circumstances, or the existence of any new cause which may influence the state of that fact, would overturn every principle, not only of sound philosophy, but of the most obvious common sense.[1] I dissent equally from M. Condorcet's paradoxical speculations and from Mr. Malthus's paradoxical answers to them.

[1] Dr. Paley, of whose depth or originality I have in general but a slender opinion, has made one very shrewd and effectual observation in reply to Hume's argument upon miracles; which is, that according to Hume's reasoning, miracles must be *equally* inadmissible and improbable, whether we believe in a superintending Providence or not. There must therefore be some fallacy in an argument, which completely sets aside so material a consideration. I would recommend this answer, which I think a true and philosophical one, to Mr. Malthus's attention, as it may perhaps lead him 'to new-model some of his arguments' about experience.

It would be unfair not to add that Mr. Malthus has made one good distinction on the subject, between an unlimited and an indefinite improvement. It is the old argument of the Heap, and is here stated with considerable effect, and novelty of appearance. The conclusion of Mr. Malthus's argument on this idle question is a sensible and pleasant account of the matter. After all, I do not quite dislike a man who quotes Bickerstaff so well.

'It does not, however, by any means, seem impossible, that by an attention to breed, a certain degree of improvement, similar to that among animals, might take place among men. Whether intellect could be communicated may be a matter of doubt: but size, strength, beauty, complexion, and perhaps even longevity, are in a degree transmissible. The error does not seem to lie, in supposing a small degree of improvement possible, but in not discriminating between a small improvement, the limit of which is undefined, and an improvement really unlimited. As the human race, however, could not be improved in this way, without condemning all the bad specimens to celibacy, it is not probable, that an attention to breed should ever become general; indeed, I know of no well-directed attempts of the kind, except in the ancient family of the Bickerstaffs, who are said to have been very successful in whitening the skins, and increasing the height of their race by prudent marriages, particularly by that very judicious cross with Maud the milk-maid, by which some very capital defects in the constitutions of the family were corrected.'

Mr. Malthus afterwards adds, 'When paradoxes of this kind are advanced by ingenious and able men, neglect has no tendency to convince them of their mistakes. Priding themselves on what they conceive to be a mark of the reach and size of their own understandings, of the extent and comprehensiveness of their views; they will look upon this neglect merely as an indication of poverty, and narrowness, in the mental exertions of their contemporaries; and only think, that the world is not yet prepared to receive their sublime truths.'—This is said *bitingly* enough. For my own part, I conceive that the world is neither prepared to receive, nor reject, nor answer them, nor decide any thing about them but that they are contrary to all our notions of things, which, till we know more about the matter, is perhaps a sufficient answer.

'Mr. Godwin at the conclusion of the third chapter of his eighth book, speaking of population, says, "There is a principle in human society, by which population is perpetually kept down to the level of the means of subsistence. Thus, among the wandering tribes of America and Asia, we never find, through the lapse of ages, that population has so increased as to render necessary the cultivation of

the earth." This principle, which Mr. Godwin thus mentions as some mysterious and occult cause, and which he does not attempt to investigate, has appeared to be the grinding law of necessity—misery, and the fear of misery.'

There is a want of clearness here. The cause which Mr. Malthus thus explains so accurately has still something dark and mysterious about it. With respect to the savage tribes Mr. Malthus states in another place, that it is not owing to the backwardness of population that agriculture has never become necessary, but to the want of agriculture that population has never increased among them. The passage is worth quoting. 'It is not, therefore,' he says, 'as Lord Kaimes imagines, that the American tribes have never increased sufficiently to render the pastoral or agricultural state necessary to them; but, from some cause or other,' [Mr. Malthus also deals in occult causes] 'they have not adopted in any great degree these more plentiful modes of procuring subsistence, and therefore, cannot have increased so as to have become populous. If hunger alone could have prompted the savage tribes of America to such a change in their habits, I do not conceive that there would have been a single nation of hunters and fishers remaining; but it is evident, that some fortunate train of circumstances, in addition to this stimulus, is necessary for this purpose; and it is undoubtedly probable, that these arts of obtaining food, will be first invented and improved in those spots that are best suited to them, and where the natural fertility of the situation,' [Is not the soil of America sufficiently fertile?] 'by allowing a greater number of people to subsist together, would give the fairest chance to the inventive powers of the human mind.'—Here then we see 'the grinding law of necessity' converted into a 'fortunate train of circumstances,' so that we have a fact arising from a *necessary cause*, and that necessary cause depending on an *accident*. The population is kept down to the level of the means of subsistence, but not to *what it is*, by the law of necessity; since there are ways and means of raising that level, and the population along with it. Notwithstanding all the misery, and all the fear of misery, which Mr. Malthus describes as thus operating to keep population down to its proper level, he is altogether unwilling to lighten their pressure, or to extend the benefits of that fortunate train of circumstances and of those more plentiful modes of obtaining food beyond their present necessary limits. Nothing can exceed his jealousy on this point. He is apprehensive lest some speculative philosopher should take it into his head 'to exterminate the inhabitants of the greatest part of Asia and Africa' on a principle of humanity. He proposes rather 'to civilize and direct the industry of the various tribes of Tartars

and Negroes, as a work of considerable time, and as having little chance of success.' He looks with an enlightened concern at the encroachments daily made by the thriving population of the colonies on the deserts and uncultivated plains of North America, grieving to see the few scattered inhabitants driven 'from their assigned and native dwelling-place,' and forseeing that by this means the whole population of that vast continent will be some time or other completely choaked up! It is, I know, a painful object to Mr. Malthus (I cannot tell how it happens) to see plenty, comfort, civilisation and numerous swarms of people succeed to want, ignorance, famine, misery, and desolation. Those who are the well-wishers of the happiness of mankind (among which number I reckon Mr. Malthus one) are always diverted from their projects by their own delicacy and scruples. Those who wish to enslave or destroy them never boggle at difficulties, or stand upon ceremony!

Mr. Malthus says that the principle, by which population is perpetually kept down to a certain level is the grinding law of necessity—misery and the fear of misery. This may be true of the savage tribes there spoken of, but if he means to apply it generally, 'it is not in any degree near the truth.' At this rate, all those who do not formally set about propagating their species ought to be restrained by want or the fear of it. Is this the fact? Misery or the fear of misery may be the check to population among the poor, but it cannot be the check to it among the rich. Yet we do not find that the rich, any more than the poor, regularly marry and get children. If this were the case, the rich would long ago have multiplied themselves into beggars. They would all have descendants, and those descendants would have others, till the world would not have room for such a number of poor gentlemen. All their wealth would be turned into rags, and they would be glad of a crust of bread. The world would be one great work-house.[1] There must therefore be some other principle which checks population among the higher classes, and makes them stop short within many degrees of

[1] It is to no purpose to object, that they would hinder the poor from increasing in proportion. This would be merely a negative check,—preventing the increase on one side, but setting no bounds to it on the other. Besides, not having the poor to work for them, they must work for themselves. Neither can it be said that property is a fluctuating thing, that changes hands, and passes from the rich to the poor and from the poor back again to the rich, still keeping up the same inequality; for the greatest wealth would soon be melted down by the principle of population, and it is only by the accumulation and transmission of property in regular descents that any great inequality can subsist. Mr. Malthus wishes to preserve the balance of society by hindering the poor from marrying; perhaps it would be preserved as effectually by forcing the rich to marry.

actual poverty, besides 'misery and the fear of misery.' They do not even come within sight of misery: the fact is that they are as unwilling to descend from the highest pitch of luxury as the poor are to sink into the lowest state of want.—Mr. Malthus by asserting in this careless manner that population can only be checked by misery or the fear of misery, gains a main point. He has always a certain quantity of misery *in bank*, as you must put so much salt in your porridge, and so many poor devils standing on the brink of wretchedness, as a sort of out-guard or forlorn hope, to ward off the evils of population from the society at large. Thus the enemy is sure to be defeated, before it can make any impression on the body of the community. This would be very well if we had to deal with an external, and not with an internal enemy. But is it the poor then only, who are subject to this disease of population? Are the rich quite proof against the evils of this all-pervading principle, this inevitable law of nature? If the account which Mr. Malthus gives of that principle were true, its ravages could no more be checked by devoting a certain class of the community to glut 'its ravenous maw,' than you could keep the plague out of a house by placing some one at the door to catch it. Either misery and the dread of misery are not absolutely necessary to keep population within due bounds, or nothing short of the general spread of misery and poverty through the whole community could save us from it. Mr. Malthus tries to shut the gates of mercy on mankind by an ill-natured manœuvre! From the little trouble our author gives himself about the application of his arithmetical and geometrical ratios to the rich, and his confidence in the method of inoculating the poor only by way of prevention, one would suppose that the former had no concern in the affair: that 'they neither marry nor are given in marriage'; but leaving the vulgar business of procreation to their inferiors, only look on to see that they do not overstock the world. Why no, says Mr. Malthus, I have always insisted on *vice* as one of the necessary checks to population; and though in the upper ranks of life, the restraints on marriage cannot be said to be imposed by misery or the fear of misery, yet it cannot be denied that these restraints lead to a great deal of vice and profligacy, which answer the purpose just as well.—There is one merit I shall not deny to Mr. Malthus, which is, that he has adapted his remedies with great skill and judgment to the different tempers, habits, and circumstances of his patients. In his division of the evils of human life, he has allotted to the poor *all* the misery, and to the rich *as much vice as they please!* These last will I daresay be very well satisfied with this distribution.—These remarks sufficiently shew that we cannot apologize for all the misery there is

in the world by saying, that nothing else can put a stop to the evils of population; nor for all the vice, by saying that it is the alternative of misery. It cannot be pretended, that no one would ever indulge in vicious gratifications, but from the apprehension of reducing himself to want by having a family.—'But he cannot maintain them in a certain style.'—True: vice is then a very convenient auxiliary to pride, vanity, luxury, artificial distinctions, &c. but it is not a resource against want. I once knew an instance of a gentleman and lady who had a very romantic passion for each other, but who could not afford to marry because they could only muster seven thousand pounds between them. Were they not to be pitied? What could they do in this case? Why, the lady no doubt would behave with all the wonted fortitude of her sex on the occasion: but the poor man must certainly be driven into vicious courses. Oh! no: I had forgot he was a clergyman; and his cloth would not admit of any such thing. Vice does not therefore seem to be *always* a necessary consequence of the obstacles to marriage. Moral restraint is always practicable, where the opinion of the world renders it necessary. At all events, I conceive that either one or the other of Mr. Malthus's remedies may be dispensed with: they are not *both* necessary. By his own account, (as formerly seen) extreme poverty is a very ineffectual bar to population; and as to vice, if it could be administered in doses, proportioned to the occasion, so much and no more, it might be an excellent cure; but the misfortune is, that when it once begins, there is no end of it. To change my metaphor, it takes the bit in its mouth, and sets off at a glorious rate, without the least spur from necessity, always keeping as much a-head of the occasion as Mr. Malthus's geometrical series keeps a-head of his arithmetical one. Some persons may perhaps argue, that there is a natural connection between vice and misery, inasmuch as without the temptation of want among the poor, the vices of the rich would lack proper objects to exercise themselves upon: so that, there being no one to offer temptation to, and no one having any very great temptations to offer, people would be forced to marry among their *equals*, unless the trifling consideration of not being able to provide immediately for a large family should induce them to moderate their passions for a while. This is an argument which I shall not controvert: the disturbing that beautiful harmony and dependence which at present subsists between vice and misery would certainly lead us back in a great measure to all the evils which Mr. Malthus anticipates as arising out of a state of excessive virtue and happiness, and the most perfect form of society.

I shall here quote at large Mr. Malthus's account of the origin of the distinctions of property as necessarily arising from the pressure of

population on the means of subsistence, and from that principle solely. I shall mark what I think the most noticeable parts in italics, and make some observations at the end.

'It may be curious to observe in the case that we have been supposing, how some of the principal laws, which at present govern civilized society, would be successively dictated by the most imperious necessity. As man, according to Mr. Godwin, is the creature of the impressions to which he is subject, the goadings of want could not continue long before some violations of public or private stock would necessarily take place. As these violations increased in number and extent, *the more active and comprehensive intellects of the society would soon perceive*, that while population was fast increasing, the yearly produce of the country would shortly begin to diminish. The urgency of the case would suggest the necessity of some immediate measures being taken for the general safety. Some kind of convention would then be called, and the dangerous situation of the country stated in the strongest terms. *It would be observed, that while they lived in the midst of plenty it was of little consequence who laboured the least, or who possessed the least, as every man was perfectly willing and ready to supply the wants of his neighbour. But that the question was no longer whether one man should give to another that which he did not use himself; but whether he should give to his neighbour the food which was absolutely necessary to his own existence. It would be represented that the number of those who were in want very greatly exceeded the number and means of those who should supply them*; that these pressing wants, which from the state of the produce of the country, could not all be gratified, had occasioned some flagrant violations of justice; that these violations had already checked the increase of food, and would, if they were not by some means or other prevented, throw the whole community into confusion: that imperious necessity seemed to dictate, that a yearly increase of produce should, if possible, be obtained at all events; that in order to effect this first great and indispensable purpose it would be advisable to make a more complete division of land, and to secure every man's property against violation by the most powerful sanctions.

'It might be urged perhaps, by some objectors, that as the fertility of the land increased, and various accidents occurred, the shares of some men might be much more than sufficient for their support; and that when the reign of self love was once established, *they would not distribute their surplus produce without some compensation in return.* It would be observed in answer, that this was an inconvenience greatly to be lamented; but that it was an evil which would bear no comparison to the black train of distresses which would inevitably be occasioned by the insecurity of property; *that the quantity of food*

which one man could consume, was necessarily limited by the narrow capacity of the human stomach ; that it was not certainly probable that he should throw away the rest ; and if he exchanged his surplus produce for the labour of others, this would be better than that these others should absolutely starve.

'It seems highly probable therefore, that an administration of property *not very different from that which prevails in civilized states at present* would be established as the best though inadequate remedy for the evils which were pressing on the society.

'The next subject which would come under discussion, intimately connected with the preceding, is the commerce of the sexes. It would be urged by those who had turned their attention to the *true cause of the difficulties under which the community laboured, that while every man felt secure that all his children would be well provided for by general benevolence, the powers of the earth would be absolutely inadequate to produce food for the population which would inevitably ensue* ; that even if the whole attention and labour of the society were directed to this sole point, and if by the most perfect security of property, and every other encouragement that could be thought of, the greatest possible increase of produce were yearly obtained ; yet still the increase of food would by no means keep pace with the much more rapid increase of population ; that some check to population therefore was imperiously called for ; that the most natural and obvious check seemed to be to make every man provide for his own children ; that this would operate in some respect as a measure and a guide in the increase of population, as it might be expected that no man would bring beings into the world for whom he could not find the means of support ; that where this notwithstanding was the case, it seemed necessary for the example of others, that the disgrace and inconvenience attending such a conduct should fall upon that individual who had thus inconsiderately plunged himself and his innocent children into want and misery.

'The institution of marriage, or at least of some express or implied obligation on every man to support his own children, seems to be the natural result of these reasonings in a community under the difficulties that we have supposed.

'When these two fundamental laws of society, the security of property, and the institution of marriage were once established, inequality of conditions must necessarily follow. Those who were born after the division of property would come *into a world already possessed.* If their parents from having too large a family were unable to give them sufficient for their support, what could they do in a world where every thing was appropriated ? We have seen the fatal effects that would result to society if every man had *a valid claim to an*

equal share of the produce of the earth. The members of a family which was grown too large for the original division of land appropriated to it, *could not then demand a part of the surplus produce of others as a debt of justice. It has appeared that from the inevitable laws of human nature some human beings will be exposed to want. These are the unhappy persons who in the great lottery of life have drawn a blank. The number of these persons would soon exceed the ability of the surplus produce to supply. Moral merit is a very difficult criterion except in extreme cases. The owners of surplus produce would in general seek some more obvious mark of distinction; and it seems to be both natural and just, that except upon particular occasions their choice should fall upon those who were able, and professed themselves willing to exert their strength in procuring a further surplus produce, which would at once benefit the community, and enable the proprietors to afford assistance to greater numbers. All who were in want of food would be urged by imperious necessity to offer their labour in exchange for this article, so absolutely necessary to existence. The fund appropriated to the maintenance of labour would be the aggregate quantity of food possessed by the owners of land beyond their own consumption. When the demands upon this fund were great and numerous it would naturally be divided into very small shares. Labour would be ill paid. Men would offer to work for a bare subsistence; and the rearing of families would be checked by sickness and misery. On the contrary, when this fund was increasing fast; when it was great in proportion to the number of claimants, it would be divided in much larger shares. No man would exchange his labour without receiving an ample quantity of food in return. Labourers would live in ease and comfort, and would consequently be able to rear a numerous and vigorous offspring.*

'*On the state of this fund the happiness or the degree of misery, prevailing among the lower classes of people in every known state, at present chiefly depends; and on this happiness or degree of misery depends principally the increase, stationariness, or decrease of population.*

'*And thus it appears, that a society constituted according to the most beautiful form that imagination can conceive, with benevolence for its moving principle instead of self love, and with every evil disposition in all its members corrected by reason, not force, would from the inevitable laws of nature, and not from any original depravity of man, or of human institutions, degenerate in a very short period into a society constructed upon a plan not essentially different from that which prevails in every known state at present; a society divided into a class of proprietors and a class of labourers, and with self-love for the mainspring of the great machine;* we may, therefore, venture to pronounce with certainty, that if Mr. Godwin's system of society were established in its utmost perfection,

instead of myriads of centuries, not thirty years could elapse before its utter destruction from the simple principle of population.'

Not to insist on the absurdity, with which Mr. Malthus seems to be enamoured, of believing that the change here predicted would be the consequence of the inevitable laws of nature, not of any inherent depravity in the human mind, when it is evident that the whole mischief originates in the folly and headstrong passions of the individuals composing this extraordinary society, all the members of which are actuated by the purest motives of reason and virtue, I shall at once suppose a state of society not indeed perfect, but equal, and with self-love, and a little common sense, instead of benevolence and perfect wisdom, for its moving principles; and see whether it would not be possible for such a state of practical equality, admitting neither poverty nor riches, to last more than 'thirty years, before its *utter destruction from the simple principle of population.*' The question is, if I understand it rightly, how that principle *alone* (I do not enter into the general structure, foundations, or purposes of civil society, I propose to examine the question only as a branch of political economy, or as it relates to the physical sustenance of mankind, which is the point of view in which Mr. Malthus has treated it) how I say that principle imperiously requires, that there should be one class of the community, ready to perish of want except as they are kept from it by severe and unremitting exertion, and another class living in ease and luxury for no other purpose than to keep the good things of this life from the first class, because if they were admitted to a share of them they would be immediately subjected to greater want and hardships than ever. It is to be remembered that Mr. Malthus here pretends to bring forward a new theory of property; to have added the key-stone to the arch of political society, which, he says, was in danger of falling without it; to enforce the rights of the rich, and set aside the claims of the poor as false and unfounded; and by shewing how the distinctions of property are immediately connected with the physical nature and very existence of mankind in a way that had not been supposed before, to point out the necessity of arming the law with new rigour, and steeling the heart with fresh obduracy to second the decisions of his pragmatical philosophy. The laws of England recognize the right of the poor man to live by his labour; Mr. Malthus denies this right, and holds it up to ridicule. The question is, which of them we shall believe. I shall therefore examine the subject freely, having so good an authority on my side.

All that I can find Mr. Malthus has discovered is, that it would be necessary in the progress of society, in order to stave off the evils of population, to make a regulation, that every man should be obliged

to work for a subsistence, and to provide for his own children. A great matter truly! But having allowed to Mr. Malthus that these two regulations would be *necessary* in the common course of things, I cannot at the same time help thinking that they would also be *sufficient*—to avert the approach of famine, which is the point at issue. I can easily understand if every man had a valid claim to an equal share of the produce of the earth, that this abstract unqualified right would lead to great inconveniences—but not when that abstract right is clogged with the condition, that he should work for his share of it. I can also admit that I can have no claim to the surplus produce of another without some compensation in return. This would certainly be hard. But it does not appear (upon the face of the argument) how I should therefore have no claim to the produce of my own industry; or how any other person has a right to force me to work for him without making me what compensation I think fit. *He* has a right to his estate, *I* have a right to my labour. As to any produce, whether surplus or not, which he may raise from it, he has a right to keep it to himself; as to that which I raise for him, it seems to be a subject of voluntary agreement. Again, if a man who is as industrious as myself, and equally reaps the benefit of his industry chuses to have the additional solace of a wife and family, as he has all the *fun*, I see no reason why he should not have all the trouble; it is neither fair nor equal that I should make a drudge of myself, or be put to inconvenience for the sake of his amusements. Let us see then how the argument stands in this stage of it. The reason which appeared for not allowing to every man a valid claim to an equal share of the produce of the earth was, that the admission of such a claim would only be an excuse for idleness. The extravagant, the worthless, and indolent would thus prey upon the honest and laborious part of the community. (We are supposing a case where every evil disposition and original depravity had *not* been completely eradicated by reason and philosophy.) Even if no such characters existed, they would hardly fail to be produced by having such fine encouragement given them. On the other hand, if every one was at liberty to saddle his neighbour or the community with as many children as he pleased, there would either be no sufficient check to the inordinate increase of population, or at least any one person who got the start in the race of matrimony would have it in his power to deprive the others of their right to the surplus produce of their labour by claiming it for his family. It is necessary then to prevent the imposition of any one's fastening himself and children on another for support, that there should be a certain *appropriation of the common stock*; that is, that each man's claim upon it should be in proportion

to the share he had in increasing it. The next consideration is whether with this hold upon him, you would not be able to make him effectually exert himself, and at the same time prevent him from having more children than he could maintain, the same all-powerful stimulus of self-interest equally counteracting his indolence and his indiscretion. Mr. Malthus says that the true cause of the difficulties under which the community would labour, would be the excessive tendency to population, arising from the security felt by every man that his children would be well provided for by the general benevolence: by taking away this security then, and imposing the task of maintaining them upon himself, you remove the only cause of the unavoidable tendency of population to excess, and of all the confusion that would ensue, by making his selfishness and his indolence operate as direct checks on his sensual propensities. He would be tied to his good behaviour as effectually as a country fellow is at present by being bound in a penalty of twenty pounds to the parish for every bastard child that he gets. If every man's earnings were in proportion to his exertions, if his share of the necessaries, the comforts, or even the superfluities of life were derived from the produce of his own toil, or ingenuity, or determined by equitable *compensation*, I cannot conceive how there could be any greater security for regularity of conduct and a general spirit of industry in the several members of the community, as far as was consistent with health and the real enjoyment of life. If these principles are not sufficient to ensure the good order of society in such circumstances, I should like to know what are the principles by which it is enforced at present. They are nothing more than the regular connection between industry and its reward, and the additional charge or labour to which a man necessarily subjects himself by being encumbered with a family. The only difference is in the proportion between the reward, and the exertion, or the rate at which the payment of labour is fixed. So far then we see no very pressing symptoms of the dissolution of the society, or of any violent departure from this system of decent equality, from the sole principle of population. Yet we have not hitherto got (in the regular course of the argument) so far as the distinction of a class of labourers, and a class of proprietors. It may be urged perhaps that nothing but extreme want or misery can furnish a stimulus sufficiently strong to produce 'the labour necessary for the support of an extended population,' or counteract the principle of population. But Mr. Malthus himself admits that 'the most constant and best directed efforts of industry are to be found among a class of people above the class of the wretchedly poor,' among those who have something to

lose, and something to gain, and who, happen what will, cannot be worse off than they are. He also admits that it is among this middling class of people, that we are to look for most instances of self-denial, prudence, and a competent resistance to the principle of population. I do not therefore understand either the weight or consistency of the charge which he brings against Paine of having fallen into the most fundamental errors respecting the principles of government by confounding the affairs of Europe with those of America. If the people in America are not forced to labour (and there are no people more industrious) by extreme poverty, if they are not forced to be prudent (and their prudence is I believe equal to their industry) by the scantiness of the soil, or the unequal distribution of its produce, no matter whether the state is old or new, whether the population is increasing or stationary, the example proves equally in all cases that wretchedness is not the *sine qua non* of industry, and that the way to hinder people from taking *desperate* steps is not to involve them in despair. The current of our daily life, the springs of our activity or fortitude, may be supplied as well from hope as fear, from 'cheerful and confident thoughts' as the apparition of famine stalking just behind us. The merchant attends to his business, settles his accounts, and answers his correspondents as diligently and punctually as the shop-keeper. The shop-keeper minds his customers, and puffs off his goods, tells more lies, is a greater drudge, and gets less for his pains than the merchant. The shoeblack piques himself upon giving the last polish to a gentleman's shoes, and gets a penny for his trouble. In all these cases, it is not strictly the proportion between the exertion and the object, neither hope nor fear in the abstract, that determines the degree of our exertions, but the balance of our hopes and fears, the *difference* that it will make to us in our situation whether we exert ourselves to the utmost or not, and the impossibility of turning our labour to any better account that habitually regulates our conduct.[1] We all do the best for ourselves that we can. This is at least a general rule.—But let us suppose, though I do not think Mr. Malthus has thrown any new or striking light on the way, in which such a change would be brought about, that it is found necessary to make a regular division of the land, and that a class of proprietors

[1] Thus the shop-keeper cannot in general be supposed to be actuated by any fear of want. His exertions are animated entirely by the prospect of gain, or advantage. Yet how trifling are his profits compared with those of the merchant. This however does not abate his diligence. It may be said that the advantage is as great to him. That is, it is the greatest in his power to make; which is the very thing I mean to say. In fact we are wound up to a certain pitch of resolution and activity almost as mechanically as we wind up a clock.

and a class of labourers is consequently established. Let us see in this case what proportion of the surplus produce of the ground might be supposed to fall to the share of the labourer, or whether if any thing more was allowed him than what was just enough to keep him alive and enable him to stagger through the tasks of the day, both rich and poor (but especially the latter) would not suffer grievously from all such impious and inhuman attempts, as our author afterwards calls them, to reverse the laws of nature, or decrees of Providence (which you please) 'by which some human beings are inevitably exposed to want.' I shall argue the question solely on the ground stated by Mr. Malthus. I shall suppose that every proprietor has an absolute right to his property, and to the *whole* produce of his own exertions. There are two other questions to be considered, namely, whether the right to the labour of others and to the produce of their labour attaches to the possession of the soil, secondly, if that is not the case, to what proportion of the produce of the ground the labourer is naturally entitled by his exertions. Mr. Malthus infers that from the establishment of the two fundamental laws, security of property, and the institution of marriage, inequality of conditions must necessarily follow. I confess I do not see this necessary consequence. I would ask, upon what plea Mr. Malthus succeeded in establishing these two fundamental laws, but because they were necessary and competent to stimulate the exertions and restrain the passions of the community at large, that is, to maintain a general practical equality, to regulate each person's indulgences according to their industry, to lay an even tax upon every man, and thus prevent the return of fraud, violence, confusion, want and misery. Grant that the most fatal effects would result to society, if every man had a valid claim to *an equal share* of the produce of the earth; it by no means follows that the same fatal effects would result to society from allowing to every man a valid claim to a share of the produce of the earth *proportioned* to his labour. Yet I doubt whether any great inequality could subsist, while each man had this valid claim. It is one thing to have a right to the produce of your own exertions, and another to have a right to the produce of the earth, that is, of the labour of others. It is so far from being fair to apply the same reasoning to these two things, that the evils which would be the necessary consequences of the one, cannot possibly result from the other. The one is a direct contradiction to the other. It is on this distinction in fact, that all property and all society is originally founded. By making it equally the interest of each individual to exert himself, you in all probability secure an equal degree of industry and comfort in each individual. At least, a society formed upon this plan would have as fair a chance

of realising all the advantages of which it was capable, with as few deviations from the original direction and design, as a society, where only a less degree of equality was *possible*, would have of coming up to its original idea. Industry and regularity of behaviour must gain ground, where these habits were enforced by the general example of the whole society, and where the sacrifice to be made was less, and the reward more certain. I might appeal to the history of all countries in proof of this. Industry flourishes most in those countries, where there is the greatest equality of conditions, and where in consequence instances of extreme distress can rarely occur. The excessive depression of the lower class of the community can only (by taking away the spring of hope, and making it nearly impossible for them to fall lower,) dishearten industry, and make them regardless of consequences. It cannot be laid down as an axiom, that you animate industry, in proportion as you take away its reward. It may be said that the poor will not go through extreme hardships but from the fear of starving. I know no reason why such hardships are necessary but because one man is obliged to do the work of several.—These general observations are not set aside by supposing the right of property to be established. All that I can understand by a right of property is a right in any one to cultivate a piece of land, be it more or less, and a right at the same time to prevent any one else from cultivating it, or reaping the produce. This, in whatever way a man comes by it, is the utmost extent of this right. 'Those who were born after the division of property,' says Mr. Malthus, 'would come into *a world already possessed*.' [How the whole world should come to be possessed immediately after the division of property I do not understand.] 'If their parents, from having too large a family, were unable to give them sufficient for their support, what could they do in a world, where every thing was appropriated?' [Just now *the world*, and at present, *every thing in it* is appropriated.] 'We have seen the fatal effects that would result to society, if every man had a valid claim to an equal share of the produce of the earth.' [This has been answered.] 'The members of a family which was grown too large for the original division of land appropriated to it could not then demand a part of the *surplus produce of others* as a debt of justice.' [Certainly not. They would have no right to it, because one man would have no right to another man's property; but that right, as far as relates to the surplus produce, is not backed by the necessity of the case, as Mr. Malthus would lead us to suppose, or because every thing is already appropriated.] 'It has appeared that, from the inevitable laws of human nature, some beings will be exposed to

want.' [That is the question.] 'The number of those persons would soon exceed the ability of the *surplus produce* to supply.' I believe so, if they depended on the surplus produce of the labour of the rich to supply them. But the long and the short of it is that these laborious landholders, these owners of surplus produce, finding that their own exertions could not supply all their own wants, and at the same time keep pace with their benevolence to those unhappy persons, who in the great lottery of life had drawn a blank, would call to their aid such of these as professed themselves able and willing to exert their strength in procuring a *further surplus produce*, which would enable the proprietors to afford assistance to greater numbers, that is, out of the produce of their own labour, not out of that of the proprietors. To hear Mr. Malthus talk, one would suppose that the rich were really a very hard-working, ill-used people, who are not suffered to enjoy the earnings of their honest industry in quiet by a set of troublesome, unsatisfied, luxurious, idle people called *the poor*. Or one might suppose that a landed estate was a machine that did its own work; or that it was like a large plum-cake, which the owner might at once cut up into slices, and either eat them himself, or give them away to others, just as he pleased. In this case I grant that the poor might be said to depend entirely upon the bounty or *surplus produce* of the rich; and as they would have no trouble in procuring their share but merely that of asking for it, their demands would no doubt be a little unreasonable, and in short, if they were complied with, the estate, the surplus produce, or the plumb-cake (call it which you will) would soon be gone. The question would no longer be 'whether one man should give to another that which he did not use himself: but whether he should give to his neighbour the food which was absolutely necessary to his own existence.' But I cannot admit that they would be reduced to any such necessity merely from allowing to the labourer as much of the additional produce of the ground as he himself had really *added* to it. I repeat that I do not see how a man's reaping the produce, and no more than the produce of his industry, can operate as an inducement to idleness, or to the excessive multiplication of children, when notwithstanding all his industry it is impossible he should provide for them without either diminishing his own comforts, or if the population is already full, plunging them and himself into want and misery. This addition to the argument is like a foil to a sword—it prevents any dangerous consequences. If I say to a number of people, that they may each of them have as much of a heap of corn as they desire, the whole of it would very soon be bespoke, but if I tell them that they may each of them have as much as they can *carry away* themselves, there might be enough to load

them all, and I might have plenty left for my own consumption. The ability and the willingness of a man to labour, (when these are made the general foundation of his claim to the produce of the earth) at once set bounds to his own rapacious demands, and effectually limit the population.—If Mr. Malthus had shewn that nothing but extreme misery can excite to industry or check population, he would then have shewn the necessity of such a state. But if it has appeared in various ways that there is no connection between these things, or that if there is, it is directly contrary to what Mr. Malthus supposes it, then he has failed in his attempt to regulate the price of labour by the principle of population, or to prove that this should be fixed so low, as only just to keep the labourer from starving. Certainly any advance in the price of labour, or a more equal distribution of the produce of the earth would enable a greater number of persons to live in comfort, and would increase population; but it is the height of absurdity, as I have shewn over and over again, to suppose that it would lead to an excessive or unrestricted increase; as if by making people acquainted with comfort and decency, you were teaching them to fall in love with misery. This is the real jut and bearing of the question. The author of the Essay, to assist his argument, transposes the question. He represents the labouring class of the community as a set of useless, supernumerary paupers, living on charity, or on the labour of the industrious proprietor. If this representation had any foundation, I should be ready to admit that these interlopers had no claim on any part of *the surplus produce of others as a debt of justice*. They must owe every thing to favour, and would be entirely at the mercy of their benefactors. Every reader must perceive, how little this account is in any degree near the truth. The case is not that of a person both willing and able to labour for himself, and imparting freely to another, who had done nothing to deserve it, a part of the surplus produce of the soil, but of a person bargaining with another to do all his work for him, and allowing him as a bribe part of the produce of his own labour in return. It is not therefore a question of right any more than it is a question of expediency, but a question of power on one side, and of necessity on the other. On the degree of power, or on that of the necessity, and on nothing else, will the price of labour depend. Mr. Malthus somewhere talks of a man's having no right to subsistence when his labour will not *fairly* purchase it. This word *fairness* conveys to my ears no meaning but that of the struggle between power and want, just spoken of. 'A man,' he says, 'born into a world already possessed, if the society do not want his labour, has no claim of *right* to the smallest portion of food.' This is, as if the question was of an individual, pestering a laborious

community for a job, when they do not want his assistance, and not of the laborious part of the community demanding a small portion of food or the means of subsistence out of the surplus produce of their labour as *a fair compensation* for their trouble! I sometimes think that abstruse subjects are best illustrated by familiar examples, and I shall accordingly give one. Suppose I have got possession of an island which I either took from somebody else, or was the first to occupy. But no matter how I came by it, I am in possession of it, and that is enough. Suppose then I see another person coming towards it either in a canoe (these questions are always first decided in a state very nearly approaching a state of nature) or swimming from some other island as I conceive either with intent to drive me from it, or to defraud me of the produce of my labour. Now even allowing that I had more than enough for myself, that part of my surplus produce was devoured by fowls or wild beasts, or that I threw it for sport into the sea, yet I should contend that I have a right, a strict right in one sense of the word, to take out a long pole, and push this unfair intruder from the shore, and try to sink his boat or himself in the water to get rid of him, and defend my own *right*. But suppose that instead of his coming to me, I go to him, and persuade him to return with me; and that when I have got him home, I want to set him to work to do either part or the whole of my business for me. In this case I should conceive that he is at liberty either to work or refuse working just as he thinks proper, to work on what terms he thinks proper, to receive only a small part, or the half, or more than half the produce as he pleases; or if I do not chuse to agree to his terms, I must do my work myself. What possible right have I over him? His right to his liberty is just as good as my right to my property. It is an excellent *cheveux-de-fris*, and if he is as idle as I am lazy, he will make his market of it. I say then that this original right continues in all stages of society, unless where it has been specifically given up; and acts as a counterpoise to the insolence of property. If indeed the poor will work for the rich at a certain rate, they are not bound to employ others who demand higher wages, or a greater number than they want: but as it is plain that they must either work themselves, or get others to work for them, over whom they have no right whatever, I contend that the mass of the labouring community have always a right to *strike*, to demand what wages they please; the least that they can demand is enough to support them and their families; and the real contest will be between the aversion of the rich to labour, and of the poor to famine. This seems to be the philosophy of the question. It is also the spirit of the laws of England, which have left a provision

for the poor; wisely considering, no doubt, that they who received their all from the labour of others were bound to provide out of their superfluities for the necessities of such as were in want. If it be said that this principle will lead to extreme abuse in practice, I answer, No, for there is hardly any one, who will live in dependence, or on casualties, if he can help it. The check to the abuse is sufficiently provided in the miserable precariousness and disgusting nature of the remedy. But if from the extreme inequality of conditions, that is, from one part of the community having been able to engross all the advantages of society to themselves, so that they can trample on the others at pleasure, the poor are reduced so low in intellect and feeling as to be indifferent to every consideration of the kind, neither will they be restrained from following their inclinations by Mr. Malthus's grinding law of necessity, by the abolition of the poor laws, or by the prospect of seeing their children starving at the doors of the rich. It is not by their own fault alone that they have fallen into this degradation; those who have brought them into it ought to be answerable for some of the consequences. The way to obviate those consequences is not by obstinately increasing the pressure, but by lessening it. It is not my business to inquire how a society formed upon the simple plan above-mentioned might be supposed to degenerate in consequence of the different passions, follies, vices, and circumstances of mankind, into a state of excessive inequality and wretchedness: it is sufficient for my purpose to have shewn, that such a change was not rendered necessary by the sole principle of population, or that it would not be absolutely impossible for a state of actual equality to last 'thirty years' without producing the total overthrow and destruction of the society. Equality produces no such maddening effects on the principle of population, nor is it a thing, any approaches to which must be fatal to human happiness, and are universally to be dreaded. The connection therefore between that degree of inequality, which terminates in extreme vice and misery, and the necessary restraints on population, is not so obvious or indissoluble, as to give Mr. Malthus a right to 'qualify' the luxuries of the rich, and the distresses of the poor as the inevitable consequences of the fundamental laws of nature, and as necessary to the very existence of society. I shall here take the liberty of quoting the two following passages from Mr. Malthus's Essay, which seem exactly to confirm my ideas on the subject, only better expressed, and stated in a much neater manner. 'In most countries, among the lower classes of people, there appears to be something like a standard of wretchedness, a point below which, they will not continue to marry and propagate their species. This standard is different in different countries, and is formed by various concurring circumstances of soil, climate,

government, degree of knowledge, and civilization, &c. The principal circumstances which contribute to raise it, are, liberty, security of property, the spread of knowledge, and *a taste for the conveniences and the comforts of life*. Those which contribute principally to lower it are despotism and ignorance.' For what purpose did Mr. Malthus write his book? 'In an attempt to better the condition of the lower classes of society, our object should be to raise this standard as high as possible, by cultivating a spirit of independence, a decent pride, and a taste for cleanliness and comfort among the poor. These habits would be best inculcated by a system of general education and, when strongly fixed, would be *the most powerful means of preventing their marrying with the prospect of being obliged to forfeit such advantages; and would consequently raise them nearer to the middle classes of society*.' Yet Mr. Malthus elsewhere attempts to prove that the pressure of population on the means of subsistence can only be kept back by a system of terror and famine, as the pressure of a crowd is only kept back by the soldiers' bayonets. I have thus endeavoured to answer the *play of words*, by which Mr. Malthus undertakes to prove that the rich have an absolute right to the disposal of the whole of the surplus produce of *the labour of others*. After this preparation, I shall venture to trust the reader's imagination with the passages, in which he tries to put down private charity, and to prove the right of the rich (whenever they conveniently can) to starve the poor. They are very pretty passages.

'There is one right, which man has generally been thought to possess, which I am confident he neither does, nor can, possess, a right to subsistence when his labour will not *fairly* purchase it. Our laws indeed say, that he has this right, and bind the society to furnish employment and food to those who cannot get them in the regular market; but in so doing, they attempt to reverse the laws of nature; and it is, in consequence, to be expected, not only that they should fail in their object, but that the poor who were intended to be benefited, should suffer most cruelly from this inhuman deceit which is practised upon them.

'A man who is born into a world already possessed, if he cannot get subsistence from his parents on whom he has a just demand, and if the society do not want his labour, has no claim of *right* to the smallest portion of food, and, in fact, has no business to be where he is. At nature's mighty feast there is no vacant cover for him. She tells him to be gone, and will quickly execute her own orders, if he do not work upon the compassion of some of her guests. If these guests get up and make room for him, other intruders immediately appear demanding the same favour. The report of a provision

for all that come, fills the hall with numerous claimants. The order and harmony of the feast is disturbed, the plenty that before reigned is changed into scarcity; and the happiness of the guests is destroyed by the spectacle of misery and dependence in every part of the hall, and by the clamorous importunity of those, who are justly enraged at not finding the provision which they had been taught to expect. The guests learn too late their error, in counteracting those strict orders to all intruders, issued by the great mistress of the feast, who, wishing that all her guests should have plenty, and knowing that she could not provide for unlimited numbers, humanely refused to admit fresh comers when her table was already full.' This is a very brilliant description, and a pleasing allegory. Our author luxuriates in the dearth of nature: he cannot contain his triumph: he frolics with his subject in the gaiety of his heart, and his tongue grows wanton in praise of famine. But let us examine it not as a display of imagination, but as a piece of reasoning. In the first place, I cannot admit the assertion that 'at nature's mighty feast there is no vacant cover for the poor man.' There are plenty of vacant covers but that the guests at the head of the table have seized upon all those at the lower end, before the table was full. Or if there were no vacant cover, it would be no great matter, he only asks for the crumbs which fall from rich men's tables, and the bones which they throw to their dogs. 'She (nature) tells him to be gone, and will quickly execute her own orders, if he do not work on the compassion of some of the guests.' When I see a poor old man, who after a life of unceasing labour is obliged at last to beg his bread, driven from the door of the rich man by a surly porter, and half a dozen sleek well-fed dogs, kept for the pleasure of their master or mistress, jumping up from the fire-side, or bouncing out of their warm kennels upon him, I am, according to Mr. Malthus, in the whole of this scene, to fancy nature presiding in person and executing her own orders against this unwelcome intruder, who as he is bent fairly double with hard labour, and can no longer get employment in the regular market, has no claim of *right* (as our author emphatically expresses it) to the smallest portion of food, and in fact has no business to be where he is. The preference which is often given to the inferior animals over the human species by the institutions and customs of society is bad enough. But Mr. Malthus wishes to go farther. By the institutions of society a rich man is at liberty to give his superabundance either to the poor or to his dogs. Mr. Malthus will not allow him this liberty, but says that by the laws of nature he is bound to give it to his dogs, because if we suffer the poor to work upon our compassion at all, this will only embolden their impor-

tunity, 'and the order and harmony that before reigned at nature's feast will be disturbed and changed into want and confusion.' This might probably be the consequence, if the rich, or the chief guests had provided the entertainment for themselves; or if nature, like a liberal hostess, had kindly provided it for them, at her own proper cost and expence, without any obligations to the poor. It might be necessary in this case for those who had either provided the feast, or been expressly invited to it, to keep a pretty strict hand over those idle and disorderly persons, to whose importunity there was no end. But the question really is, not whether all those should be supplied who press forward into the hall without having contributed any thing to the plenty that abounds, but whether after the different guests have contributed largely, each of them having brought his share and more than his share, the proprietors of the mansion have a right to turn them all out again, and only leave a few scraps or coarse bits to be flung to them out of the windows, or handed to them outside the door. Or whether if every man was allowed to eat the *mess* which he had brought with him in quiet, he would immediately go out, and bring in half a dozen more, so that he would have nothing left for himself, and the hall would be instantly overcrowded. This statement is, I believe, considerably nearer the truth than Mr. Malthus's. And if so, we can have little difficulty in deciding whether there is any ground for Mr. Malthus's apprehensions of the danger of raising the condition of the poor, or relieving the distresses to which, in their present unnatural and unnecessary state of degradation, they are unavoidably subject. 'The spectacle of misery and dependence' never arises from the scantiness of the provision, or from the nearly equal shares, in which it is divided, giving encouragement to a greater number of applicants; for those helpless intruders, against whom Mr. Malthus issues such strict orders, namely the *rising generation*, never come into the world till they are sent for, and it is not likely that those who find themselves warm in their seats with every thing comfortable about them and nothing to complain of, should when there is really no room for fresh comers, send for more people to shove them out of their places, and eat the victuals out of their mouths. 'The Abbé Raynal has said that, "Avant toutes les loix sociales l'homme avoit le droit de subsister." He might with just as much propriety have said, that before the institution of social laws, every man had a right to live a hundred years. Undoubtedly he had then, and has still, a good right to live a hundred years, nay a thousand *if he can*, without interfering with *the right of others to live*; but the affair, in both cases, is principally an affair of power, not of right. Social laws very greatly increase this power, by enabling a much greater

number to subsist than could subsist without them, and so far very greatly enlarge *le droit de subsister*; but neither before nor after the institution of social laws, could *an unlimited number subsist*; and before, as well as since, he who ceased to have *the power*, ceased to have *the right*.' In this passage Mr. Malthus 'sharpens his understanding upon his flinty heart.' The logic is smart and lively and unembarrased: it is not encumbered with any of the awkward feelings of humanity. After all, he misses his aim. For his argument proves that the right of subsistence or one man's right to live is only limited by its interfering with the right of others to live: that is, that a man has then only no right to live, when there is nothing for him to live upon; in which case the question becomes an affair of power, not of right. But it is not the question whether the proprietor should starve himself in order that the labourer may live; but whether the proprietor has a right to live in extravagance and luxury, while the labourer is starving. As to his absolute right to the produce of the soil, that is to say, of the labour of others, we have seen that he has no such right either to the whole of the surplus produce, or to *as much of it as he pleases*. With respect then to the share of the produce which the labourer has a right to demand, 'it is not likely that he should exchange his labour, without receiving a *sufficient* quantity of food in return,' to enable him to live, unless the right of the proprietor to exact the labour of others on what terms he chuses, is seconded by a kind of power, which has very little connection with the power of the earth to bring forth no more produce. As to the right of the rich, in a moral point of view, wantonly to starve the poor, it is I think best to say nothing about it. Social institutions, on which our author lays great stress as enlarging the power of subsistence and the right along with it, do not deny relief to the poor. For this very reason Mr. Malthus wishes to shoulder them aside, in order to make room for certain regulations of his own, more agreeable to *the laws of nature and the principle of population*. A little farther on he says, 'As a previous step even to any considerable alteration in the present system, which would *contract* or stop the increase of the relief to be given, it appears to *me* that we are bound in justice and honour '*formally to disclaim the right of the poor to support*.' It would be more modest in Mr. Malthus to let them *disclaim* it for themselves. But it appears that the reason for *contracting* the relief afforded them by the present system, and denying the right altogether, is that there is no subsistence for an unlimited number. As to the point at which it may be prudent or proper for the rich to withhold assistance from the poor, I shall not enquire into it. But I shall dispute Mr. Malthus's right to thrust

the poor man out of existence because there is no room for him 'at nature's mighty feast,' till he can give some better reason for it than that there is not room for an *unlimited number*!—The maintainance of the needy poor is a tax on the inequality of conditions and the luxuries of the rich, which they could not enjoy but in consequence of that general depression of the lower classes which continually subjects them to difficulties and want. It is a *douceur* to keep them quiet, and prevent them from enforcing those more solid, and important claims, not interfering with the right of property, but a direct consequence of the right of personal freedom, and of their right to set their own price on their own exertions, which would raise them above the reach of want, and enable them to maintain their own *poor*. But they cannot do this without a general combination of the labouring part of the community; and if any thing of this kind were to be attempted, the legislature we know would instantly interfere to prevent it. I know indeed that the legislature assumes a right to prevent combinations of the poor to keep themselves above want, though they *disclaim* any right to meddle with monopolies of corn, or other combinations *in the regular course of trade*, by which the rich and thriving endeavour to grind the poor. But though the men of property have thus retained the legislature on their side, Mr. Malthus does not think this practical security sufficient: he thinks it absolutely necessary to recur to first principles; and that they may see how well qualified he is to act as chamber counsel in the business, he makes them a present of his Essay, written expressly for the purpose, and containing a new institute of the laws of nature, and a complete theory of population, in which it is clearly proved that the poor have no right to live any longer than the rich will let them. In this work which those to whom it is addressed should have bound in morocco, and constantly lying by them as a text-book to refer to in all cases of difficulty, it is shewn that there is no injustice in forcing the poorer classes to work almost for nothing, because they have no right to the produce of their labour, and no inhumanity in denying them assistance when they happen to be in want, because they ought not to be encouraged in idleness. Thus armed with 'metaphysical aid,' and conscience-proof, the rich will I should think be able very successfully to resist the unjust claims of the poor—to a subsistence!

Neither the fundamental laws of property then, nor the principle of population seem to imply the necessity of any great inequality of conditions. They do not even require the distinction of rich and poor, much less do they imply the right of the rich to starve the poor. What shews that there must be some radical defect in our author's reasoning is, that a substantial equality does really prevail in

several countries, where the right of property is established, and where the *principle of population* has been known to exist for a great length of time. Property may certainly be made a handle for power; and that power may, and does almost constantly lead to abuse, I mean to want and wretchedness. But neither the power nor the abuse is any part of the original right; and the original end and design of the right itself, namely to procure a sufficient supply for the actual population, and to prevent an unlimited increase of population, is just as well, or indeed much better answered *without*, than *with* the abuse.—But perhaps we have mistaken Mr. Malthus all this while. Perhaps he only wishes to secure to the rich their original right, which is to reserve a certain share of the produce for their own use; and to prevent their being driven out of house and home by the poor, under pretence of population. He seems to say in one place, that the fund appropriated to the maintenance of labour is the aggregate quantity of food possessed by the owners of land beyond what is necessary for their own immediate consumption. He says this, or something like it. In this case, it is evident, that 'no man would be forced to exchange his labour without receiving an ample quantity of food in return.' At this rate the labourer would be as rich, only not so idle as the proprietor. The only difference between them would be that one of them would get his share for nothing, and the other would be obliged to work for it. It would in fact be a common fund divided equally between the rich and poor, or more properly speaking, between the sleeping and the acting partners in this joint-concern. If so, I do not see what the poor could have to complain of, as, if they were ever in want, it must be owing to their own idleness, extravagance, and imprudence, and they would deserve to be punished. Now Mr. Malthus is ready to prove with a pair of compasses that this is always the state of the case. The poor are always just as well off as the rich, if it is not their own fault, and the want in which they are sometimes plunged is not owing to an unequal division of the shares among as many as can possibly subsist, but to the folly of pushing population beyond the verge of subsistence. By this means there is nothing left for those who come last, who have consequently no right to be where they are, because there is nothing for them. 'The quantity of food' (says Mr. Malthus) 'which one man can consume is necessarily limited by the narrow capacity of the human stomach; it is not certainly probable that he should throw away the rest; and if he exchange his surplus produce for the labour of others, this is better than that these others should absolutely starve.' Here then we see the necessary limits of the inequality of conditions, or of the almost imperceptible difference in the advantages which the rich

have over the poor. But is there really then no difference between being gorged and *not* being starved, between eating venison and turtle-soup, and drinking three bottles of wine a-day, and living on crusts of bread and water? Is it physically impossible that one man should eat more than does him good, or that another should not get his full share? But it may be asked, what advantage can it be to the rich to consume more than they want? None. But the food which is thus misapplied, might be of great use to the poor. Is there no such thing as waste in great houses, which must considerably diminish the disproportion between the quantity of food, and the narrow capacity of the human stomach? When I consider that the rich are neither a bit taller, nor stouter, nor born with larger stomachs than other men, it does indeed seem at first sight a little extraordinary that they should make such havoc in the world as they do. But the wonder vanishes the instant we recollect that crowd of dependents always dangling about them, who intercept the surplus produce long before it can reach the labourer, and who instead of dividing his toil with the husbandman, or sharing in other tasks not less useful or necessary are maintained by the distresses and hardships of the poor. A rich man has not only himself and his family to keep, but he has to keep his gentlemen, his valet, his butler, his cook, his coachman, his groom, his horses, his hounds, his ornamental gardener, his architect, his upholsterer, his jeweller, his silversmith, his man's-mercer, and haberdasher, his pimps, parasites, and players, his poets, painters, and musicians, not to mention a hundred more, who are of no service on the face of the earth, nor have any mortal thing to do—but to tend upon his person, to dress his hair, to brush his clothes, or air his shirt, to run on his errands, to do his jobs, to manage his affairs, to please his taste, to pamper his appetites, to study his humours, to follow his steps, to fawn and cringe and bow and smile as he directs. All these persons depend entirely on the bounty of their patron; and though they do nothing to increase the produce of the ground, they do not devour it the less eagerly, and it may be supposed that they make a good gap in it. In the mean time, the productive labourer, and hard-working mechanic are straitened in their circumstances, and doomed to unremitting toil and drudgery, that these hangers-on of the rich may live at their ease, or contribute only to the vanity and convenience of their employers. This as I understand it is the pinch of the grievance.—The rich man has not only to supply his own wants, but the wants of those who depend upon him, and who do nothing to support either him or themselves. He is something in the situation of a balance-master, who undertakes to support twenty men, some on his head, some on his shoulders, and others suspended from different

parts of his body: his own weight is nothing: it is the weight of those who hang upon him that makes the rich man a burthen to the poor. I see a little old emaciated man riding on a poney along the street, and a stout healthy, well looking man riding behind him at some distance, who follows him like his puppet, who turns as he turns, and whenever he passes him touches his hat in a respectful manner. What is the meaning of this? It is a nobleman, and his servant. The man is as well-fed, as comfortably clothed, and as well-mounted as his master: what makes all the difference is, that there are thirty or forty gradations of society between them, each looking up with envy, or down with contempt on the other, as they have more or less power over the necessaries and conveniences of life not for themselves, but others, and so can hire the respect of a certain number of dependents. So little can we judge of the state of society in the mechanical way pointed out by Mr. Malthus. But it is time to proceed with my author.

'As Mr. Godwin seems disposed to understand, and candidly to admit the truth of, the principal argument in the essay, I feel the more mortified, that he should think it a fair inference from my positions, that the political superintendents of a community are bound to exercise a paternal vigilance and care over the two great means of advantage and safety to mankind, misery and vice; and that no evil is more to be dreaded than that we should have too little of them in the world, to confine the principle of population within its proper sphere.' [This I think a fair statement of the argument.] 'I am at a loss to conceive what class of evils Mr. Godwin imagines is yet behind, which these salutary checks are to prevent.' [It is not Mr. Godwin's business, but our author's to find out such a class of evils.] 'For my own part, I know of no stronger or more general terms than vice and misery; and the sole question is, respecting a greater or less degree of them. The only reason why I object to Mr. Godwin's system, is, my full conviction that an attempt to execute it, would very greatly increase the quantity of vice and misery in society.'

Be it so. But still Mr. Malthus thinks a less degree of them necessary to prevent a greater; and it therefore seems a fair inference from his positions to say, that the greatest care ought to be taken, not to diminish the necessary quantity. He approves much of the things in his own mind, but he does not like to hear them called by their names in a disrespectful way. He does not like the odium attached to them.

'Mr. Godwin observes, that he should naturally be disposed to pronounce that man strangely indifferent to schemes of extraordinary improvement in society, who made it a conclusive argument against

them, that, when they were realized, they might peradventure be of no permanence and duration. And yet, what is morality, individual or political, according to Mr. Godwin's own definition of it, but a calculation of consequences?' [This, I must say, is a very *abortive* kind of argument]. 'Is the physician the patron of pain, who advises his patient to bear a present evil, rather than betake himself to a remedy, which, though it might give momentary relief, would afterwards greatly aggravate all the symptoms?' [The real case is of a physician, who tells his patient he must not get well, and endeavours to keep him from doing so, because if he were once in perfect health, he would be subject to more violent returns of his disorder]. 'Is the moralist to be called an enemy to pleasure, because he recommends to a young man just entering into life, not to ruin his health and patrimony in a few years, by an excess of present gratifications, but to economize his enjoyments, that he may spread them over a longer period?' [Our Essayist would advise the young man to neglect his affairs, and ruin his health, because by a contrary method his estate would increase so that he would not be able to manage it, and it would be thrown into complete and total disorder, at the same time that his improved health and spirits would urge him to plunge into much greater excesses, than, if his constitution were debilitated in time, he would be capable of committing]. 'Of Mr. Godwin's system, according to the present arguments by which it is supported, it is not enough to say, *peradventure* it will be of no permanence: but we can pronounce *with certainty* that it will be of no permanence: and under such circumstances an attempt to execute it would unquestionably be a great political immorality.' According to the *present* arguments against it, this has not appeared to be the case.

'The permission of infanticide is bad enough, and cannot but have a bad effect on the moral sensibility of a nation; but I cannot conceive any thing much more detestable, or shocking to the feelings, than any direct regulation of this kind, although sanctioned by the names of Plato and Aristotle.' Mr. Malthus in this passage very properly gives way to his feelings, which are, in my opinion, a much better test of morality than a calculation of consequences. At the same time, he would himself make a law to starve the children of the poor, because their parents are not able to maintain them. Mr. Malthus's humanity is of the *intermittent* sort. The mention of the Chinese, of Plato or Aristotle, has a great effect in bringing the fit on: at the mention of population or the poor-laws it vanishes in an instant, and 'he is himself again.'—I hope I shall sometimes be allowed to appeal to my feelings against Mr. Malthus's authority, as he dissents from

that of Plato and Aristotle on the same *unphilosophical* plea, and to look upon those arguments as narrow and superficial, which pay no regard to 'the moral sensibility of a nation'; the more so as the system of morality prevailing at present is built upon the natural affections and common feelings and habitual prejudices of mankind, not, as Mr. Malthus pretends, on pure reason, or a dry calculation of consequences. Our author's plan is addressed neither to the *head*, nor *heart*. It retains the common sympathies of our nature only to shock and insult them, and engrafts the vices of a bad heart on a perverted understanding.

Mr. Malthus defies Mr. Godwin to point out a method, by which it is possible 'to limit the number of children to each prolific marriage.' According to his theory, there seems no way but by having a constable in the room, and converting bed-chambers into a kind of lock-up houses.—Speaking of the possibility of delaying the gratification of the passion between the sexes, he says,

'If the whole effect were to depend merely on a sense of duty, considering the powerful antagonist that is to be contended with, in the present case, I confess that I should absolutely despair. At the same time, I am strongly of opinion that a sense of duty, superadded to a sense of interest, would by no means be without its effect. There are many noble and disinterested spirits, who, though aware of the inconveniences which they may bring upon themselves by the indulgence of an early and virtuous passion, feel a kind of repugnance to listen to the dictates of mere worldly prudence, and a pride in rejecting these low considerations. There is a kind of romantic gallantry in sacrificing all for love, naturally fascinating to a young mind; and, to say the truth, if all is to be sacrificed, I do not know, in what better cause it can be done. But if a strong sense of duty could, in these instances, be added to prudential suggestions, the whole question might wear a different colour. In delaying the gratification of passion, from a sense of duty, the most disinterested spirit, the most delicate honour, might be satisfied. The romantic pride might take a different direction, and the dictates of worldly prudence might be followed with the cheerful consciousness of making a virtuous sacrifice.'

I am happy to learn that Mr. Malthus has been able to reconcile the sense of duty and interest with the gratification of his favourite passion. By preaching the virtue of celibacy with such success to others, he found it no longer necessary to practise it himself. He is not the first philosopher who extracted the flames of love out of ice. We read of such a one in Hudibras. I should be sorry to scandalize the modest reader; but really whenever I think of our author's escape

from the consequences of his own doctrine in a wife, it puts me in mind of St. Francis's triumph over his desires,

> 'Which after in enjoyment quenching,
> He hung a garland on his engine.'

This St. Francis was as great an adept as our author in the cold-sweat of the passions.

There is no end of Mr. Malthus's paradoxes. I come now to his attempts to prove that in proportion as you raise the wages of the poor, you take away their livelihood.

'Suppose, that by a subscription of the rich, the eighteen-pence, or two shillings, which men earn now, were made up five shillings, it might be imagined, perhaps, that they would then be able to live comfortably, and have a piece of meat every day for their dinner. But this would be a very false conclusion. The transfer of three additional shillings a day to each labourer would not increase the quantity of meat in the country. There is not at present enough for all to have a moderate share. What would then be the consequence? The competition among the buyers in the market of meat, would rapidly raise the price from eight pence or nine pence, to two or three shillings in the pound, and the commodity would not be divided among many more than it is at present. When an article is scarce, and cannot be distributed to all, he that can shew the most valid patent, that is, he that offers the most money, becomes the possessor. When subsistence is scarce in proportion to the number of people, it is of little consequence, whether the lowest members of the society possess two shillings or five. They must, at all events, be reduced to live upon the hardest fare, and in the smallest quantity.'

Again, some pages after he says, 'The question is, how far wealth has a tendency to better the condition of the labouring poor. It is a self-evident proposition that any general advance in the price of labour, the stock of provisions remaining the same, can only be a nominal advance, as it must shortly be followed by a *proportional* rise in provisions. The increase in the price of labour which we have supposed, would have no permanent effect therefore in giving to the labouring poor a greater command over the necessaries of life.'

On these two passages which explain the drift of our author's reasonings pretty clearly, I shall remark, first, that wealth is nothing but the power of securing to yourself the fruits of the earth, or commanding the labour of others. The more equal distribution of wealth, or the throwing a greater quantity of money (*bona fide*) into the hands of the poor must therefore enable them to procure either

a greater share of provisions or of the labour of others, or both. This I hold to be an axiom, as far as I can comprehend the subject. But Mr. Malthus says that if the wages of the poor were raised to double or treble what they are at present, this in the first place would not increase the quantity of meat in the market, nor the share which the labourer would have of it, because any advance in the price of labour must be followed by a *proportional* rise in provisions. This word is equivocal. To make out the argument, the rise ought to be not only proportional but equal to the rise of wages, which it evidently would not be. But Mr. Malthus is willing to exclude the possibility of bettering the condition of the poor, even in theory, by an *equivoque*, or any thing else. But to put an end to this miserable quackery, I would ask, whether if the rich were to divide their incomes with the poor, the latter would be any the richer for it. To say in this case, that the good things of the world would not be shared more equally among them, is flat nonsense. But any approach to a more equal division of wealth must lessen the difference between the rich and the poor *proportionally*. It is true that the lowest members of the community will still live upon the hardest fare, and in the smallest quantity: but their fare will be less hard and in larger quantities than it used to be, *in proportion* to the advance in the price of labour.

'It may at first appear strange, but I believe it is true, that I cannot by means of money, raise the condition of a poor man, and enable him to live much better than he did before, without proportionably depressing others in the same class. If I retrench the quantity of food consumed in my house, and give him what I have cut off, I then benefit him without depressing any but myself and family, who perhaps may be well able to bear it. If I turn up a piece of uncultivated land, and give him the produce, I then benefit both him and all the members of society, because what he before consumed is thrown into the common stock, and, probably, some of the new produce with it. But if I only give him money, supposing the produce of the country to remain the same, I give him a title to a larger share of that produce than formerly, which share he cannot receive without diminishing the shares of others. It is evident, that this effect in individual instances must be so small as to be totally imperceptible; but still it must exist, as many other effects do, which, like some of the insects that people the air, elude our grosser perceptions.'

It will be sufficient to ask in answer to this passage, whether when I give away my money to another, I do not necessarily retrench the quantity of food or other things consumed in my own house, and give

him what I have cut off. I give him a title to a larger share of the common produce by diminishing *my own* share. It does not matter to the community whether he or I spend the money: the only difference that it makes is between ourselves.—Mr. Malthus seems to have a notion that the rich are never the worse for their charities.

'Supposing the quantity of food in any country, to remain the same for many years together, it is evident, that this food must be divided according to the value of each man's patent, or the sum of money which he can afford to spend in this commodity so universally in request. It is a demonstrative truth, therefore, that the patents of one set of men could not be increased in value, without diminishing the value of the patents of some other set of men.'

At any rate, then, the poor would be enabled to contend with the rich. The increased value of the patents of the poor would necessarily diminish the value of the patents of the rich. In order to outbid them, they must make some other sacrifices, which they will not always be willing to do. Food to the rich is in a great measure an article of luxury: to the poor it is a necessary; and the one, about which they are chiefly concerned. Many a *petit-maître*, and ape of fashion goes without his dinner to pay for his coat, or go to the play, 'where he picks clean teeth,' &c.

'No person, I believe, will venture to doubt, that, if we were to give three additional shillings a day to every labouring man in the kingdom, as I before supposed, in order that he might have meat for his dinner, the price of meat would rise in the most rapid and unexampled manner.'

Mr. Malthus here creeps on. He first spoke of a number of individuals as having a certain sum given them. He now includes every labouring man in the kingdom. Because if we were to give five shillings a day to five hundred thousand men, the remaining five hundred thousand might be the worse for it, therefore he would have us suppose that the same or greater mischiefs would follow from giving the same sum to the whole number, or in fact from doing away that very inequality, which was the only source of the mischief. To suppose that we can allow five shillings a-day to five hundred, or ten hundred thousand people without retrenching from our own superfluities, or that we can distribute our own patents among others without diminishing our own number, is one of those perversities which I shall not attempt to answer. If the labourer with his three shillings extra is only able to purchase an ounce of meat, this will be an advantage to him. Let the rise be what it will, the rich man will evidently be less able to out-bid him than he is at present, and the rise can only be in proportion to his capacity to out-bid him.

Besides, it is not to be supposed that his additional gains would all be laid out in meat, but in articles of trade, &c. which would be rendered cheaper by the neglect of the rich, or in proportion to the run upon provisions. To assert generally that increasing the wages of the poor does not give them a greater command over the necessaries of life, is as much as to say that if they were forced to work for nothing, and could get nothing to eat, this would lower the markets, and they would be much better off than they were before. It would be looked upon as an insult, rather than a consolation, to tell them that they ought to be contented with the cheapness of provisions, and to consider that allowing them any thing for their labour, would only raise the price of meat by enabling them to buy some of it to satisfy their hunger.

How things being cheap or dear, or how there being much or little to spare, proves that that much, or little will not be divided according to the ability of different people to pay for it, is beyond my comprehension. It is ridiculous. It is saying that the money of a poor man will not *pass*, even when he has it. If the poor in consequence of having more money, or being richer could not draw to themselves a greater portion of food, there could be no room for competition, nor for an increase in the price or the demand.

'The poor who were assisted by their parishes had no reason whatever to complain of the high price of grain; because it was the excessiveness of this price, and this alone, which, by enforcing such a saving, left a greater quantity of corn, for the consumption of the lowest classes, which corn, the parish allowances enabled them to command.' [Yet Mr. Malthus has just tried to persuade us, that the increased price of provisions, occasioned by the competition of the poor, does not enforce any retrenchment of the superfluities of the higher classes, or leave a greater quantity of corn, for the consumption of the lower classes.] 'The greatest sufferers in the scarcity were undoubtedly the classes immediately above the poor; and these were in the most marked manner depressed by the excessive bounties given to those below them.' [It is better that these classes should be depressed than those below them, because they can bear it better. Is it an argument that because the pressure of a scarcity does not fall directly upon those who can bear it best, viz. the very rich, that it should therefore fall upon those, who can bear it least, viz. on the very poor? Unless Mr. Malthus can contrive to starve some one, he thinks he does nothing.] 'This distribution by giving to the poorer classes a command of food, so much greater than their degree of skill and industry entitled them to, in the actual circumstances of the country, diminished, exactly in the same proportion, that com-

mand over the necessaries of life, which the classes above them, by their superior skill and industry, would naturally possess.' [Is a man then to starve on account of his want of skill? To tack industry to skill as if the lowest classes did not work the hardest is impudence indeed.] 'And it may be a question, whether the degree of assistance which the poor received, and which prevented them from resorting to the use of those substitutes, which, in every other country, on such occasions, the great law of necessity teaches, was not more than overbalanced by the severity of the pressure on so large a body of people from the extreme high prices, and the permanent evil which must result from forcing so many persons on the parish, who before thought themselves almost out of the reach of want.'

It is a contradiction to say, that the poor were forced on the parish by the assistance they received from it. If they were to be denied this assistance from a tender regard for their morals and independence, it is a pity that the same disinterested motives, joined to the 'severe pressure' of the high prices on the classes above the poor, did not induce some of *them* to condescend to the use of those cheap and wholesome substitutes recommended by Mr. Malthus, by which means they would have saved their own pockets, and not have 'forced so many persons on the parish.'

'If we were to double the fortunes of all those who possess above a hundred a year, the effect on the price of grain would be slow and inconsiderable; but if we were to double the price of labour throughout the kingdom, the effect, in raising the price of grain, would be rapid and great.'

I do not see the harm of this rise. It would be in consequence of, and would denote the number of bellies that were filled that had not been filled before. Mr. Malthus in this passage seems to prefer a little evil to a great good.

'The parish rates and the prodigious sum expended in voluntary charity, must have had a most powerful effect in raising the price of the necessaries of life, if any reliance can be placed on the clearest general principles, confirmed as much as possible by appearances. A man with a family, has received, *to my knowledge*, fourteen shillings a week from the parish.' [Shocking to be sure.] 'His common earnings were ten shillings a week, and his weekly *revenue*, therefore, twenty-four. Before the scarcity, he had been in the habit of purchasing a bushel of flour a week with eight shillings perhaps, and consequently had two shillings out of his ten, to spare for other necessaries. During the scarcity, he was enabled to purchase the same quantity at nearly three times the price. He paid twenty-two shillings for his bushel of flour, and had, as before, two shillings

remaining for other wants.' [Good: but does Mr. Malthus deny that the scarcity would of itself have raised the price of wheat? And in that case if the labourer had had no addition to his 'weekly revenue,' instead of having the large sum of two shillings at the end of the week to lay out in other necessaries, he would have had nothing. Perhaps Mr. Malthus is ready to prove, that half a bushel of corn will go farther with a poor family in a time of scarcity than a whole one, because they would husband it more carefully.] 'Such instances could not possibly have been universal, without raising the price of wheat much higher than it really was during any part of the dearth. But similar instances were by no means infrequent, and *the system itself, of measuring the relief given by the price of grain, was general.*'

I cannot conceive of any better rule. But the gentleman is alarmed at the *voluntary* contributions extorted from the rich. After all, I do not see how the rich would suffer by their great charity, if, as our author says, the poor got nothing by it. I would ask, were the rich ever in danger of starving in the late scarcity, and were not the poor in danger of it, and would they not have starved, but for the assistance given to them? Is it better that the poor should starve than that the rich should be at the expence of relieving them? Or if the pressure in scarce times falls on the middle classes, have they to complain, that they, in whom 'life and death may always be said to contend for victory,' are still just kept alive, or that the sleek and pampered continue to fatten on the distresses of others? The false feeling which runs through all Mr. Malthus's reasonings on this subject is, that the upper classes cannot be expected to retrench any of their superfluities, to lie at the mercy of the seasons, or to contribute any thing to the general necessity, but that the whole burthen of a scarcity ought to fall on those whom Mr. Malthus calls 'the least fortunate members of the community,' on those who are most used to distress, and in whom the transition is easy and natural from poverty to famine! 'They lay heavy burthens on the poor and needy, which they will not touch with one of their fingers.' Would it not be worth our author's while to comment on this text, and shew how little it has been understood?—I remember to have heard of but one instance of a real, effectual, and judicious determination in the rich to retrench idle and superfluous waste and expence, some years ago at a time when the poor were *in want of bread*. It originated in a great and noble family, where seventy or eighty servants were kept, and where twenty or thirty guests of the first distinction 'fared sumptuously every day.' These humane and enlightened persons, struck with the difference between their own good fortune, and the neces-

sities of others, came to a resolution that the pieces of bread which they left at dinner should neither be thrown nor given away, but that the bread-baskets should be divided into little compartments with each person's name affixed to them, where he could conveniently put the piece of bread which he left, and have it *saved* till the next day. This humane example was much talked of in the neighbourhood, and soon after followed by several of the gentry, who got their bread-baskets divided into little compartments with the different names affixed, and eat the pieces of bread which they left one day, the day after—so that the poor were thus placed completely out of the reach of want!

Mr. Malthus next talks about the embarrassments of commerce, returning cheapness, &c. Now I do not see, according to his doctrine, what cheapness has to do with the question. He says, every thing depends on the quantity of provisions in the country, and that this being given, all the rest follows as a matter of course. What then does it signify whether you call a piece of paper one pound or two if you can get a proportionable quantity of food for your money?

'If instead of giving the temporary assistance of parish allowances, which might be withdrawn on the first fall of price, we had raised universally the wages of labour, it is evident, that the obstacles to a diminution of the circulation, and to returning cheapness, would have been still further increased; and the high price of labour would have become permanent, without any advantage whatever to the labourer,'—or disadvantage to the proprietor.

'There is no one that more ardently desires to see a real advance in the price of labour than myself; but the attempt to effect this object by forcibly raising the nominal price, which was practised to a certain degree, and recommended almost universally during the late scarcities, every thinking man must reprobate as puerile and ineffectual.'

'The price of labour, when left to find its natural level, is a most important political barometer, expressing the relation between the supply of provisions, and the demand for them; between the quantity to be consumed, and the number of consumers; and taken on the average, independently of accidental circumstances, it further expresses, clearly, the wants of the society respecting population; that is, whatever may be the number of children to a marriage necessary to maintain exactly the present population, the price of labour will be just sufficient to support this number, or be above it, or below it, according to the state of the real funds for the maintainance of labour, whether stationary, progressive, or retrograde. Instead, however, of considering it in this light, we consider it as something which we

may raise or depress at pleasure, something which depends principally upon his majesty's justices of the peace. When an advance in the price of provisions already expresses that the demand is too great for the supply, in order to put the labourer in the same condition as before, we raise the price of labour, that is, we increase the demand, and are then much surprised that the price of provisions continues rising. In this, we act much in the same manner, as if, when the quicksilver in the common weather-glass stood at *stormy*, we were to raise it by some forcible pressure to *settled fair*, and then be greatly astonished that it continued raining.'

This is certainly a most excellent illustration. As to the argument itself, it is all false and hollow. With respect to the rise in the price of provisions consequent on the rise of wages, I am not I confess at all concerned about it, so that the labourer is still enabled to purchase the same *necessary* quantity as before. All that is wanted is that the one should keep pace with the other. What the natural level of the price of labour is, otherwise than as it is regulated by the positive institutions of society, or as I have before stated, by the power of one set of men, and the wants of another is—like many other things in this book of Mr. Malthus's—what I do not understand. If we are to believe him, the whole is a trick. There is a pretence of sacrificing something for the relief of the poor in hard times, and then the next thing is to render that relief ineffectual, by out-bidding them, by lowering the value of money, by creating artificial wealth, and other methods. If then the rich are so entirely masters of the price of labour that they can render it real or nominal as they please, and take good care never to lose by it in the end, I should like to know how this most important political barometer has any relation to real plenty or want: how it expresses any thing more than the will of the rich and great; or the miserable pittance they are willing to allow out of the support of their own extravagant and ostentatious establishments to the maintainance of the mass of the people. It does indeed express the relation between the supply of provisions, and the demand for them, &c. supposing that a certain number of people are to consume four or five times as much (either in quantity or quality) as the others: and that this proportion is unalterable and one of the laws of nature. It further expresses the wants of the society respecting population, while this division continues, or that degree of poverty beyond which it is impossible for people to subsist at all. The object in a scarcity is not however to stop the ordinary process of population, but to alleviate the distresses of those already in existence, by a more equal distribution of the real funds for the maintainance of labour. By these funds Mr. Malthus means any

arbitrary division of the produce of the ground, which the rich find it convenient to make, and which the poor are forced to take up with as better than nothing. But the real funds for the maintenance of labour are the produce of labour. According to Mr. Malthus, they are not the produce itself, but what happens to be left of it, as the husks only and not the corn are given to the swine.

'The number of servants out of place, and of manufacturers wanting employment during the late scarcities, were melancholy proofs of the truth of these reasonings. If a general rise in the wages of labour had taken place proportioned to the price of provisions, none but farmers and a few gentlemen could have afforded to employ the same number of workmen as before. Additional crowds of servants and manufacturers would have been turned off; and those who were thus thrown out of employment, would, of course, have no other refuge than the parish. In the natural order of things, a scarcity must tend to lower, instead of to raise, the price of labour.'

This natural order has been already explained to mean a very artificial order. Our ingenious author is a great admirer of moral analogies. He sticks to the old proverb, those that have little shall have less. 'The most laborious and deserving part of the community' are to bear the brunt of all distress, *ordinary and extraordinary*. He will not suffer the positive regulations of society, which carry inequality of conditions as far almost as it can go in common cases, to relax a little in their favour in extreme cases, so as not to push them quite out of existence. I know no reason why in the natural order of things a scarcity should tend to lower, instead of raising the price of labour; but upon that common principle that the weakest are to go to the wall. The rich forsooth are a privileged class, out of the reach of fortune, 'whose solid virtue the shot of accident or dart of change can neither graze nor pierce.' In the rest of this passage, Mr. Malthus quarrels with his own favourite system, with those capricious and arbitrary institutions, in consequence of which those who ministered only to the vanity and artificial wants of the rich will in times of difficulty be turned adrift and reduced to want, or else saddled as an additional weight on the common labourer, who had enough to do to support them and their employers under the most favourable circumstances.

General answer.—I wish Mr. Malthus to state explicitly whether he means that the rise in the price of labour should be nominal or real. He has shifted his ground four or five times on the subject in the course of the chapter, now supposing it to be a mere non-entity, and now fraught with the most terrible consequences, famine, and God knows what. But it seems to me, that if nominal,

it must be nugatory, and therefore innocent; and that if real, it must be proportionably beneficial. For if real, it must throw a greater quantity of the necessaries or comforts of life into the hands of those who most want them, and take them from those who are oppressed with their superfluities. For suppose the quantity of food and the quantity of money to be fixed, given quantities (unless we suppose both, there is no reasoning about the matter) and that an additional price is given for labour: let us suppose farther that this raises the price of provisions. It is evident in this case, that the rich having less money to give, and being obliged to give more for their former luxuries, will be obliged to retrench somewhere. This must be either in provisions, or other things. First, they may retrench in the article of provisions. This will evidently leave a greater plenty for others, who stand very much in need of them; and their additional wages will be laid out in supplying themselves with what they could not otherwise have obtained. Secondly, they may retrench in articles of furniture, dress, houses, &c. and there will consequently be less demand for these things. Well then, in the first place, with regard to provisions, the poor will be no worse off in this respect than if there had been no advance in the price, for it is not to be supposed that if the rich are so attached to the luxuries of the belly as notwithstanding the increased price to buy the same quantity as ever, that they would have bought less, if the price had continued lower. They would have engrossed the markets at all events. On the other hand, they must retrench their expences in other things, in superfluities of different kinds, which will thus fall into the hands of the poor, who having been excluded from the meat-market can only lay out their additional wages in providing themselves with household conveniences, good clothes, tables, chairs, &c. What should they do with their money? It is supposed that they cannot get a morsel of meat with it: and it is not be expected that they should throw it away. Sooner than do this, they might spend it in buying smart buckles for their shoes, or garters and ribbons for their sweethearts. The labour of the mechanic, inasmuch as it is not wanted by the great, will go to enrich the lower classes. The less they are employed by the rich, in consequence of 'a more equal distribution of the money of the society,' the better able they will be to employ one another. The farmer's servant will employ the mechanic with the same money with which the farmer or his landlord would have employed him: if he has the same wages as before, he will have as much to do, or if his wages are doubled, and he has only half as much to do, this will be a proportionable relief to him on the score of labour, and would be no prejudice to his earnings

as he would get the same wages for doing half as much work. But there is no occasion to suppose any such slackness in the demand for labour. The proportion between the money, the productive and mechanical labour in the community, would remain the same: and the rise in the wages of the labouring manufacturer and mechanic to be real and effectual ought to be paid out of the profits of the master and proprietor. In this case, the demand would be the same: and it would evidently be his interest to employ the same number of men that he did before, as though he would get less by each of them, he must get more, the more hands he employs, as long as the demand continues.[1] If however our rich men and manufacturers should grow sulky upon the occasion, and take it into their heads to hoard their money in order to spite the poor, thus driving them altogether out of employ, I conceive the best use that can be made of this hoarded wealth would be to transfer it to the poor's fund, for the relief of those who are willing to work, but not to starve. On the whole, and in every view of the subject it appears to me that any addition to the price of labour must as far as it goes, be an advantage to the labourer, and that the more general and permanent it is, the greater will be the benefit to the labouring class of the community. The rise of wages would certainly take from the pomp and luxury of the rich, and it would as certainly and in the same proportion add to the comforts of the poor. I am not here recommending such a change. I only contend that it would follow the distribution of wealth; and that it is absurd to say that the poorer a man is, the richer he will be.

Mr. Malthus's acuteness amounts to a species of second-sight, whenever there is a question of famine. Thus he demonstrates that this must be the necessary consequence of fixing a maximum in a time of scarcity. Now I do not see this necessary consequence, because if it were fixed at a certain height above the common price in proportion to the deficiency, this would check the too rapid consumption. Or even without supposing this, as it would be necessary to have some kind of law or order of the police to enforce the observance of a maximum, and make the farmers and dealers bring their corn to market, the quantities in which it was brought forward might be regulated in the same way as the price. Besides,

[1] The immediate rise in the price of manufactured articles upon any rise in the price of labour is either a foolish impatience of loss, or a trick to make the labourer refund his own earnings by paying more for what he wants himself, and by being *pigeoned* by others that they may be able to pay the additional price. It has nothing to do with a fair and liberal determination to raise the price of labour, which of itself, and if not immediately counteracted by the power and artifices of the rich must always tend to the benefit of the labouring part of the community.

I do not believe that people would starve themselves with their eyes open, whether the police interfered or not. As to the epithets of illiberal, unjust, and narrow policy which some people may apply to such a measure, I would ask them whether fixing the assize of bread in London is not just the same thing. But cornfactors, forestallers and regraters are a set of people whose liberal notions place them above the law, who ought not to be looked upon in the same light with every little scurvy knavish bread and biscuit baker, nor cramped in their generous exertions to economize the public resources, and save the poor from famine at the latter end of the year—by starving them in the beginning. With respect to the parallel which Mr. Malthus attempts to establish between fixing a maximum, and raising the price of labour, I am so unfortunate as not to perceive it. He sometimes argues against raising the price of labour because it would give the poor no greater command over the provisions than before; he here talks as if it would enable them to devour every thing before them. I think neither of these suppositions is true. The high price of corn in proportion to other things will always make people unwilling to lay out more in that way than they can help, and will consequently diminish the consumption. As to famine, people will look many ways, before they submit to it.

'Independently of any considerations respecting a year of deficient crops, it is evident, that an increase of population, without a proportional increase of food, must lower the value of each man's *earnings*. The food must necessarily be distributed in smaller quantities, and consequently, a day's labour will purchase a smaller quantity of provisions.'

Why of earnings more than property? Mr. Malthus would have this considered as an elementary or philosophical work. Yet he looks only at the flattering side of his subject. A day's labour will purchase a less quantity of provisions, but a day's idleness will purchase the same. In this case idleness and industry are plaintiff and defendant; and the verdict is in favour of idleness, and industry is not only cast, but pays the costs.—It is all very well.

'The quantity of provisions consumed in workhouses, upon a part of the society, that cannot in general be considered as the most valuable part,' [or in other houses on footmen, &c. who are not the most respectable kind of paupers] 'diminishes the shares that would otherwise belong to more industrious and more worthy members, and thus in the same measure, forces more to become dependent.

'Fortunately for England, a spirit of independence still remains among the peasantry. The poor laws are strongly calculated to eradicate this spirit.' [Is it the man who reduces me to beggary,

or he who affords me relief, that lowers my condition and breaks my spirit?] 'They have succeeded in part; but had they succeeded as completely as might have been expected, their pernicious tendency would not have been so long concealed.'

It would have been discovered sooner, if Mr. Malthus had read Mr. Wallace's book sooner.

'The parish laws of England *appear* to have contributed to raise the price of provisions and to lower the real price of labour.' [Our author's demonstrations are delusive appearances. What must his *appearances* be? Shall we take them for demonstrations?] 'They have therefore contributed to impoverish that class of people whose only possession is their labour. It is also difficult to suppose, that they have not powerfully contributed to generate that carelessness and want of frugality observable among the poor, so contrary to the disposition generally to be remarked among petty tradesmen and small farmers. The labouring poor, to use a vulgar expression, seem always to live from hand to mouth. Their present wants employ their whole attention; and they seldom think of the future. Even when they have an opportunity of saving, they seldom exercise it; but all that they earn beyond their present necessities, goes, generally speaking, to the alehouse. The poor laws may, therefore, be said to diminish both the power, and the will, to save, among the common people, and thus to weaken one of the strongest incentives to sobriety and industry, and consequently to happiness.'

This passage is remarkable. It may be asked in the first place, whether the parish laws are not equally open to petty tradesmen and small farmers, as to the poor. If so, they cannot account for the difference observable between them. I shall therefore, as far as this very striking contrast goes, put the poor laws out of the question; and say that the difference in their behaviour can arise from nothing but the difference in their situations, from the greater hardships imposed on the labouring part of the community, from their different prospects in life, and the little estimation in which they are held. Mr. Malthus accounts for the carelessness and laziness of the poor from their casting a sheep's-eye at the work-house. No: they are to be accounted for from that poverty and depression which makes the work-house a temptation to them. We cannot say of those who are seduced by the prospect of a work-house—'Alas from what height fallen!' Mr. Malthus proposes to remove this dazzling object out of their way; to make them indulge in larger views of things by setting before them the prospect of their wives and children starving, in case of any accident to themselves, and to stimulate their industry by lowering their wages. The poor live from hand to mouth,

because, in general, they have no hopes of living in any other way. They seldom think of the future, because they are afraid to think of it. Their present wants employ their whole attention. This is their misfortune. Others have better luck. They have no time to think of wind-falls. Mr. Malthus may take his glass of wine after dinner, and his afternoon's nap, when, having got the Essay on Population out of his head, queen Mab 'comes to him with a tythe-pig's tail, tickling the parson as he lies asleep:—then dreams he of another benefice.' The poor cannot indulge in such pleasing speculations. If what they earn beyond their immediate necessities goes to the ale-house, it is because the severe labour they undergo requires some relaxation, because they are willing to forget the *work-house*, their old age, and the prospect of their wives and children starving, and to drown care in a mug of ale, in noise, and mirth, and laughter, and old ditties, and coarse jokes, and hot disputes; and in that sense of short-lived comfort, independence and good-fellowship, which is necessary to relieve the hurt mind and jaded body. But all these, when our author's system is once established, 'shall no more impart,

'An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.'

No human patience can submit to everlasting toil and self-denial. The prospect of mere physical comfort is not a match for continued physical suffering: and the lower classes of the people have no other motives to animate them to bear up against the ills of life, in habits of moral reflection, in the pursuits and example of the rich, or in the *real* respect and credit attached to their own good behaviour. You reduce them almost to the condition of brutes, and then grudge them their coarse enjoyments: you make machines of them, and then expect from them firmness, resolution, the love of independence, the fruits of an erect and manly spirit. Mr. Malthus, like the Sphinx, destroys his victims by the help of riddles; and makes a snare of impossibilities. As to the workmen and mechanics in manufacturing towns (to say nothing of the closeness and unwholesomeness of their occupations, which would go a good way in accounting for 'their drunkenness and dissipation') the noise and turbulence in which they live, and their being crowded together as they are must unfit them for enjoying the quiet and stillness of domestic life: they are glad to escape from the contempt which their 'squalid appearance' excites in the well-dressed mob who walk the streets, and hide their greasy clothes and smutched faces in the nearest pot-house; and to say the truth, with respect to those of them who are married, the hard features, the disjointed shapes, the coarse limbs, the carking counte-

nances, and ill-humour of their wives, occasioned by the fretful wants of a set of squalling children, cannot be supposed to prove so attractive to them, as 'the symmetry of person, the vivacity, the voluptuous softness of temper, the affectionate kindness of feeling, the imagination, and the wit' which in Mr. Malthus's opinion constitute the charm of the sex. After all, are the higher classes a bit better than their inferiors? Are drinking and dissipation confined to the poor? As Mr. Malthus ingenuously observes, 'Our Doctors Commons and the lives that many married men [of the better sort] are known to lead sufficiently prove the reverse of this.' I believe it will hardly be proposed to make moral merit a rule for the division of the good things of fortune. The only difference in the vices of the rich and the poor is, that the rich can *afford* theirs better. Nevertheless they set up for censors and reformers of the morals of the poor. I remember to have seen a red-faced swag-bellied bishop (such another as Father Paul in the Duenna) who could drink his two bottles of wine without being affected, belch out a severe reprimand against a poor labouring man, who was staggering home after drinking a quart of small beer. As to our author's plan of *starving* the poor out of their vices, I must say (all circumstances considered) that I think it, in the first place, an impudent proposal, because their executioners are no better than themselves; in the second place, a silly proposal, because, if not literally followed up, it must evidently defeat itself; in the third place, a malignant proposal, because if it were strictly put in practice, it could only produce despair and sullen insensibility among the poor, and destroy all traces of justice or humanity among the rich; in the fourth place, a lying proposal, because it is contrary to Mr. Malthus's own reasonings, who in many places has shewn that the only way to improve the condition of the poor is not by urging them to extremity, but by raising them above want, by inspiring them with a respect for themselves, and a taste for the comforts and decencies of life by sharing in them.

'That the poor (says Mr. Malthus) employed in manufactures consider parish assistance as a *reason* why they may spend all the wages which they earn, and enjoy themselves while they can, *appears to be evident*, from the number of families that upon the failure of any great manufactory, immediately fall upon the parish.' This is an assumption of the question. Our author here confounds the fact and the reason together. It appears evident that the manufacturer often spends his earnings as he gets them, but not that he does so in the hope that his family may go to the parish after his death. 'A man who might not be deterred from going to the alehouse from the consideration that on his death or sickness he should leave his wife and

family upon the parish, might yet hesitate in thus dissipating his earnings if he were assured that in either of these cases *his family must starve*, or be left to the support of casual bounty.' Now it has appeared that his conduct is regulated by motives and circumstances which have nothing to do with what happens to his wife and children after his death. It may therefore be questioned whether the catastrophe proposed by Mr. Malthus would have the desired effect. But certainly it could not have this effect as long as there was a dependence on casual bounty: and to stop up this resource it would be absolutely necessary to call in the aid of the magistrate to prevent the indiscreet and unavailing interference of private charity, and execute the sentence of the law of nature and the law of God on his wife and hapless progeny, justly doomed to starve for the neglect of their parent. What effect this would have on the 'moral sensibility of the nation' I leave to Mr. Malthus to determine with his well-known penetration and humanity. 'The suffering a poor family to perish of want is bad enough: but I cannot conceive of any thing much more detestable or shocking to the feelings than any direct regulation of this kind, by whatever name it is sanctioned.' Mr. Malthus may perhaps object that I have quoted him unfairly; and applied to the *organizing the starving of a family* what he applied to the direct regulation of *infanticide*,—a very different thing! Unfortunately, I have not sufficient delicacy of *verbal* feeling to be able to find out the difference.—Now I recollect, however, what shocked Mr. Malthus so much in speaking of infanticide was the supposition that the parents were to be forced to destroy their own children, when they thought they could not maintain them; according to our author's mode of starving a family, the society are only to stand by and prevent others from affording them assistance. Here we see there is not that direct violation of the parental affection which, says Mr. Malthus, is the principal aggravation of the other case. He explains the grounds of this distinction in another part of his work. 'If,' says he, 'the parents desert their child, *they* ought to be answerable for the crime. The infant is, comparatively speaking, of no value to the society,[1] as others will immediately supply its place. Its principal value is on account of its being the object of one of the most delightful passions in human nature - parental affection. But if this value be disregarded by those who are *alone* in a capacity to feel it, the *society* cannot be called upon to put itself in their place and has no further business in

[1] This is something like Mr. Godwin's saying, he does not regard a new-born infant with any peculiar complacency. They both differ from the founder of the Christian religion, who has said, Bring unto me little children. But modern philosophers scorn to pin their faith on musty sayings.

its protection,' than just to see that its parents do not ill-use, or kill or eat it. Nothing can be plainer than the inference from these premises. The society, which is bound to prevent or punish the least barbarity in parents towards their children, because they are to them an object of a very delightful passion, may exercise any barbarity it pleases on them itself, because it is not in a capacity to feel this affection towards them. It is not only not called upon to put itself in their place, but is bound to prevent others from doing so, and thus reversing the laws of nature, by which 'the child is confided exclusively to its parents.' It is only, says our author, by extinguishing every spark of humanity in the breasts of the community towards the children of others, that the ties of parental affection can ever exist in their full force, or be expected 'to remain in the state in which nature has left them.' Mr. Malthus may therefore in his zeal for the growth of parental affection, and the entire suppression of common humanity as subversive of it, very consistently brand every attempt of the society to make the parents accomplices in starving their children, as the greatest injustice, though we may very heroically proceed to starve them ourselves, repeating after this high-priest of nature, Their blood be upon us and upon *our* children! This is the best account I can give of the fundamental distinction which Mr. Malthus makes between the impropriety and inhumanity of *destroying children* by law, and the propriety and humanity of *starving* a family by law. But I shall recur to the same subject presently, when I come to the detail of his plan.

Mr. Malthus devotes the first and second chapters of his fourth book to an inquiry into our obligations to regulate the sexual passion by considerations of prudence, &c. into the general capacity of human nature to act from rational motives, and the good effects which would result from such a conduct. He begins his third chapter in the following manner.

'He who publishes a moral code, or system of duties, however firmly he may be convinced of the strong obligation on each individual strictly to conform to it, has never the folly to imagine that it will be universally or even generally practised. But this is no valid objection against the publication of the code. If it were, the same objection would always have applied; we should be totally without general rules; and to the vices of mankind arising from temptation, would be added a much longer list, than we have at present, of vices from ignorance.' [This is well said, and 'tis a kind of good deed to say well.] 'Judging merely from the light of nature, if we feel convinced of the misery arising from a redundant population, on the one hand, and of the evils and unhappiness, particularly to the female sex,

arising from promiscuous intercourse, on the other, I do not see how it is possible for any person, who acknowledges the principle of utility as the great foundation of morals, to escape the conclusion that moral restraint, till we are in a condition to support a family, is the strict line of duty; and when revelation is taken into the question, this duty undoubtedly receives very powerful confirmation. At the same time, I believe that few of my readers can be less sanguine in their expectations of any great change in the general conduct of men on this subject than I am; and the chief reason, why, in the last chapter, I allowed myself to suppose the universal prevalence of this virtue, was, that I might endeavour to remove any imputation on the goodness of the Deity, by shewing that the evils arising from the principle of population were exactly of the same nature as the generality of other evils which excite fewer complaints, that they were increased by human ignorance and indolence, and diminished by human knowledge and virtue; and on the supposition, that each individual strictly fulfilled his duty, would be almost totally removed; and this, without any general diminution of those sources of pleasure, arising from the regulated indulgence of the passions, which have been justly considered as the principal ingredients of human happiness.'

Mr. Malthus here appears in the double character of a politician and divine. Sir Hugh Evans says, 'I like not when a 'omans has a great peard.' I must say, I do not like to see a philosopher in a cassock. He has you at an unfair advantage, and it is a hundred to one but he will make use of it. When he is pressed hard, or sees his arguments in danger of being cut off, he puts them into the false belly of theology. It is like hunting an otter: you do not know where to have him.—What our author says of moral systems is certainly true: neither the preaching of St. Paul, nor probably his own has been able to put an end to that pious, courtly race of men, who strive equally to serve God and mammon. Mr. Malthus in the last chapter took an opportunity of paying his court to the former: the leaf is no sooner turned, than he begins to insinuate himself into the good graces of the latter, by disclaiming the sincerity of his late professions. In the passage just quoted, Mr. Malthus not only tells you that he had endeavoured to give a more favourable account of the expectations of mankind and their capacity for virtue and happiness than he believes has any foundation in human nature; but he at the same time lets you into his motive for so doing, viz. his wish to remove any imputation on the divine goodness, which purpose, it seems, would not have been so well answered by the real statement of the fact. Having thus decently paid his compliments to his profession, and justified the goodness of God from *the ideal capacity*

of man for virtue he next proceeds to prove the wisdom of human institutions by his *real incapacity* for it. He was yesterday engaged to whitewash Providence: to day he is retained on the other side of the question, which he assures his clients shall not suffer through any anxiety of his about consistency. This seems to be playing at fast and loose both with religion and morality. Mr. Malthus has indeed set apart the preceding chapter to shew that 'the evils arising from the principle of population are exactly of the same nature as the generality of other evils which excite fewer complaints, that they were increased by human ignorance and indolence, and diminished by human knowledge and virtue.' But I do not know what right he had to do this, seeing that it is the express object of his work to shew that the evils of population are unlike all other evils, neither generated by human folly, nor to be removed or palliated by human wisdom, but by vice and misery alone: that they are *sui generis*, and not to be reasoned upon, like any thing else. Neither do I understand how the evils of population can be said to excite more complaints than other evils, when Mr. Malthus tells us that till his time nobody had thought of tracing them to their true source, but erroneously ascribed them to human institutions, vice, folly, &c. Mr. Malthus himself was the first who proved them to be irremediable and inherent in the constitution of nature, and thus brought an imputation upon Providence. To remove this imputation he supposes them to admit of a remedy: then again lest any one should take him at his word and be for applying this remedy, he says they admit of no such remedy; and that it was all an idle supposition of his own without any foundation, a harmless picture drawn to illustrate the *imaginary* goodness of Providence.

'If it will answer any purpose of illustration, I see no harm in drawing the picture of a society in which each individual is supposed strictly to fulfil his duties: nor does a writer appear to be justly liable to the imputation of being visionary, unless he makes such universal or general obedience necessary to the practical utility of his system, and to that degree of moderate and partial improvement, which is all that can rationally be expected from the most complete knowledge of our duties.

'But in this respect, there is an essential difference between that improved state of society which I have supposed in the last chapter, and most of the other speculations on this subject. The improvement there supposed, if we ever should make approaches towards it, is to be effected in the way in which we have been in the habit of seeing all the greatest improvements effected, by a direct application to the interest and happiness of each individual. It is not required of us to

act from motives, to which we are unaccustomed; to pursue a general good, which we may not distinctly comprehend, or the effect of which may be weakened by distance or diffusion.'

Is there not such a virtue as patriotism? To what class of motives would our author refer this feeling? The way in which Mr. Malthus wishes to effect his improvement in the virtue and happiness of mankind, is one in which no such improvement has hitherto been effected. But I see Mr. Malthus's object. He is only anxious, lest any one should attempt to rear the fabric of human excellence on any other basis than that of vice and misery. So that we begin with this solid and necessary foundation, he does not care to what height the building is carried. So that we set out on our journey of reform through the gate at which Mr. Malthus is sitting at the receipt of custom, (whether it faces the road or not) it gives him little concern what direction we take, or how far we go afterwards, or whether we ever reach our promised destination.

'The duty of each individual is express and intelligible to the humblest capacity. It is merely that he is not to bring beings into the world for whom he cannot find the means of support. When once this subject is cleared from the obscurity thrown over it by parochial laws and *private benevolence*, every man must feel the strongest conviction of such an obligation. If he cannot support his children, they must *starve*; and if he marry in the face of a fair probability that he shall not be able to support his children, he is guilty of all the evils which he thus brings upon himself, his wife, and his offspring. It is clearly his interest, and will tend greatly to promote his happiness to defer marrying, till, by industry and economy, he is in a capacity to support the children, that he may reasonably expect from his marriage and as he cannot in the mean time, gratify his passions, without violating *an express command of God*, and running a great risk of injuring himself, or some of his fellow creatures, considerations of his own interest and happiness will dictate to him the strongest obligation to moral restraint.

'However powerful may be the impulses of passion *they are generally in some degree modified by reason*. And it does not seem entirely visionary to suppose, that if the true and permanent cause of poverty were clearly explained,' [This I take to be that the rich have more than the poor] 'and forcibly brought home to each man's bosom, it would have some, and perhaps not an inconsiderable, influence on his conduct; at least, the experiment has never yet been fairly tried.'

It is astonishing, what a propensity Mr. Malthus has to try experiments, if there is any mischief to be done by them. He has

a perfect horror of experiments that are to be tried on the higher qualities of our nature, from which any great, unmixed, and general good is to be expected. But in proportion as the end is low, and the means base, he acquires confidence, his tremours forsake him, and he approaches boldly to the task with nerves of iron. His humanity is of a singular cast. What is grand and elevated, seems to be his aversion. Pure benefits are of too cloying a quality to please his taste. He is willing to improve the morals of the people by extirpating the common feelings of mankind, and will submit to the introduction of a greater degree of plenty and comfort, provided it is prefaced by famine.

His ardour is kindled not so much in proportion to the difficulty, as to the disgusting nature of the task. He is a kind of sentimental nightman, an amateur chimney-sweeper, a patriotic Jack-ketch. The spirit of adventure is roused in him only by the prospect of dirty roads, and narrow, crooked paths. He never flinches where there is any evil to be done, that good may come of it! His present plan is an admirable one of the kind—*Omne tulit punctum*—it comprises both extremes of vice and misery. The poor are to make a formal surrender of their right to private charity or parish assistance, that the rich may be able to lay out all their money on their vices.

'Till these erroneous ideas have been corrected, and the language of *nature* and reason has been generally heard on the subject of population, instead of the language of error and prejudice, it cannot be said that any fair experiment has been made with the understandings of the common people; and we cannot justly accuse them of improvidence and want of industry, till they act as they do now, after it has been brought home to their comprehensions, that they are themselves the cause of their own poverty; that the means of redress are in their own hands, and *in the hands of no other persons whatever; that the society in which they live, and the government which presides over it, are totally without power in this respect;* and however ardently they may desire to relieve them, and whatever attempts they may make to do so, they are really and truly unable to execute what they benevolently wish, but unjustly promise; that when the wages of labour will not maintain a family, it is an incontrovertible sign that *their king and country do not want more subjects*, or at least *that they cannot support them*; that if they marry in this case, so far from fulfilling a duty to society, they are throwing a useless burden on it, at the same time that they are plunging themselves into distress; and that they are acting directly contrary to the will of God, and bringing down upon themselves various diseases, which might all, or in a great part, have been avoided, if they had attended to the repeated admonitions which

he gives, by the general laws of nature, to every being capable of reason.' [1]

The erroneous ideas of which Mr. Malthus here complains as prevailing in the minds of the common people, to the prejudice of the language of reason and nature, are, as he states just before, that their poverty and distress are *in part* owing to their not getting more for their labour, to the slowness with which the parish assist them, to the avarice of the rich, and to the institutions of society, or to fortune which has assigned them a place so beset with difficulties and dependence! No, poverty is owing to none of these causes, but it is owing entirely to *itself*. Mr. Burke has said, that people will not be argued into slavery. Our author attempts more than this. He tries to persuade them out of their senses, and to argue them into slavery and famine besides. There is a distinction which it is sometimes dangerous to insist on in common life; but which it is necessary to attend to in matters of reasoning, and that is the distinction between truth and falsehood. For instance, Mr. Malthus asserts, that the means of remedying their complaints are in the hands of the poor, and in the hands of no other persons whatever. Now this is not true. It is not true that the society in which they live and the government which presides over it are *totally* without power in this respect. It is not true that however ardently they may wish to relieve them, they are utterly unable to execute their benevolent intentions. It is not an incontrovertible sign that their king and country do not want more subjects, and that they cannot support them, when the common wages of labour will not maintain a family. As Mr. Malthus's positions exist no where but in the Essay of Population, they will hardly support those weighty practical conclusions which he wishes to build upon them. Some persons may perhaps be at a loss to understand what Mr. Malthus can mean by his assertions. The following may be some clue to what in itself has very much the appearance of irony.

'Among the other prejudices which have prevailed on the subject

[1] But a moment ago the subject was involved in the most profound obscurity, and great advantages were expected from the manner in which Mr. Malthus was to bring it home to each man's comprehension. In the passage immediately following the above, our author quotes Dr. Paley's Moral Philosophy, and as he often refers to this work, I shall here take the liberty of entering my protest against it. It is a school in which a man learns to tamper with his own mind, and will become any thing sooner than an honest man. It is a directory, shewing him how to disguise and palliate his real motives (however unworthy) by metaphysical subterfuges, and where to look for every infirmity which can beset him, with its appropriate apology, taken from the common topics of religion and morality. All that is good in Paley is taken from Tucker; and even *his* morality is not the most bracing that can be imagined.

of population, it has been generally thought, that while there is either waste among the rich, or land remaining uncultivated in any country, the complaint for want of food cannot be justly founded, or, at least, that the pressure of distress upon the poor is to be attributed to the ill-conduct of the higher classes of society, and the bad management of the land. The real effect, however, of these two circumstances, is merely to narrow the limit of the actual population; but they have little or no influence on what may be called the average pressure of distress on the poorer members of society. If our ancestors had been so frugal and industrious, and had transmitted such habits to their posterity, that nothing superfluous was now consumed by the higher classes, no horses were used for pleasure, and no land was left uncultivated, a striking difference would appear in the state of the actual population; but probably none whatever, in the state of the lower classes of people, with respect to the price of labour, and the facility of supporting a family. The waste among the rich and the horses kept for pleasure, have indeed a little the effect of the consumption of grain in distilleries, noticed before with regard to China. On the supposition that the food consumed in this manner may be withdrawn on the occasion of a scarcity, and be applied to the relief of the poor, they operate, certainly, as far as they go, like granaries which are only opened at the time that they are most wanted, and must therefore tend rather to benefit than injure the lower classes of society.

'With regard to uncultivated land, it is evident that its effect upon the poor is neither to injure, nor to benefit them. The sudden cultivation of it, will indeed tend to improve their condition for a time, and the neglect of lands before cultivated, will certainly make their situation worse for a certain period; but when no changes of this kind are going forward, the effect of uncultivated land on the lower classes, operates merely like the possession of a smaller territory.'

After what has been said in various parts of these observations, I might leave these passages to the contempt of the reader. But Mr. Malthus shall not complain of my remissness. I will give him heaped measure. I say then that the argument here employed leads to a direct absurdity: for it would justify any degree of neglect, or waste, or wanton abuse that can be imagined. If thirty-nine out of the forty counties in England were laid waste to-morrow, this would be no evil, according to Mr. Malthus, because it would not increase the average pressure of distress in the remaining one. If half the corn that is grown every year, besides what is already employed in supplying the waste of the rich, were regularly sent off by waggon-loads, and thrown into the sea, there would be still no harm done. A *striking* difference would undoubtedly appear in the number of poor people, but probably

none whatever in the state of those who had not been starved. If double the number of horses were kept for pleasure, and only half the number of poor were kept alive, these latter would have no reason to complain, because they would be as well, or better off than ever; and if a limited number are tolerably well provided for, this is all that can ever be expected, because by the laws of nature it is impossible to provide for an unlimited number. To say nothing of those immense granaries and boundless resources which are thus formed in the uncultivated parts of the earth, or which might be created at any time of extraordinary distress by employing in the service of man what had hitherto been providently reserved for the beasts.

While there is waste among the rich, or neglect of lands, or while the breed of horses is encouraged so as to put a stop to the breed of men, I deny that the distresses of the poor, or the restraints on population are the necessary effects of the laws of nature, or of the unavoidable disproportion between the increase of mankind and the capacity of the earth to produce food for a greater number. But Mr. Malthus has his usual resource. Though the distresses of the poor were actually relieved as they might be, and though the unnecessary checks to population were taken off, yet the time would come when these wants could no longer be supplied, and when the restraints on population would become necessary, from the inability of the earth to yield any more, and from the whole produce being applied to the best advantage. This is undoubtedly true: but I do not think it a reason that we are not to put off the evil as long as we can, or that we are not to attempt any improvement, because we cannot go on for ever improving. Death is certain, and 'will come when it will come.' Is that a reason why I should take poison? There is in all Mr. Malthus's arguments on this subject the same *twist* that there was in the Irish servant, who was told to call his master early, and waked him two hours before the time to tell him how much longer he had to sleep. Mr. Malthus would have insisted on his getting up and dressing himself in the middle of the night.

Mr. Malthus allows, that 'the object of those who really wish to better the condition of the poor must be to raise the relative proportion between the price of labour, and the price of provisions.' Almost in the next paragraph, however, he adds, that if we are really serious in this object, 'we must explain to them the true nature of their situation, and shew them that *the withholding the supplies of labour is the only possible way of raising its real price*.' I cannot help thinking, to use his own words, that our author's 'benevolence to the poor must be either childish play, or hypocrisy: that it must be either to amuse himself, or to pacify the minds of the common people with a mere

shew of attention to their wants.' He proceeds to instruct the poor in their true situation in a chapter which requires a few comments.

'The pressure of distress on the lower classes of people, with the habit of attributing this distress to their rulers, appears to me to be the rock of defence, the castle, the guardian spirit, of despotism. It affords to the tyrant the fatal and unanswerable plea of *necessity*.' [That is Mr. Malthus's plea.] 'While any dissatisfied man of talents has power to persuade the lower classes of people, that all their poverty and distress arise solely from the iniquity of the government, though perhaps the greatest part of what they suffer is totally unconnected with this cause, it is evident that the seeds of fresh discontents, and fresh revolutions, are continually sowing.'

That is, the way to prevent revolutions, and at the same time to produce lasting reforms is to persuade the people that all the evils which they suffer, or which the government may chuse to inflict upon them are their own fault. The way to put governments upon their good behaviour is to give them a licence to do as much mischief as they please, without being answerable for it.

'Of the tendency of mobs to produce tyranny, we may not be long without an example in this country. *As a friend to freedom, and an enemy to large standing armies*, it is with extreme reluctance that I am compelled to acknowledge, that, had it not been for the organized force in the country, the distresses of the people during the late scarcities, encouraged by the extreme ignorance and folly of many among the higher classes, might have driven them to commit the most dreadful outrages, and ultimately to involve the country in all the horrors of famine.'

Does Mr. Malthus think that this hint will dispose the government to keep up their large standing armies, or to mitigate the distresses of the people? I wonder, if Blifil had happened to be an author, whether he might not have written such a book as this.

'Should such periods often recur, a recurrence which we have too much reason to apprehend from the present state of the country, the prospect which opens to our view is melancholy in the extreme. The English constitution will be seen hastening with rapid strides to the *Euthanasia* foretold by Hume; unless its progress be interrupted by some popular commotion; and this alternative presents a picture still more appalling to the imagination. If political discontents were blended with the cries of hunger, and a revolution were to take place by the instrumentality of a mob, clamouring for want of food, the consequences would be unceasing change and unceasing carnage, the bloody career of which, nothing but the establishment of some complete despotism could arrest.'

The gentleman seems greatly alarmed at his own predictions. He points out to government the dangers arising from mobs; and shews that these again arise from discontent, and repining against the good order of society. The way proposed to cure them of this discontent, and these false notions of society is to break asunder at once the link of humanity which binds the poor to the rich, to reduce them to extremity, to cut off all hope, all over-weening expectation, all mutual kindness and good offices, by exploding the very idea of the rights of the poor, or the duties of the rich, and thus to tame them so effectually and systematically, that we shall be in no danger from mobs, revolutions, or military despotism, but shall conclude with a happy Euthanasia!

'To say that our conduct is not to be regulated by circumstances, is to betray an ignorance of the most *solid* and incontrovertible principles of morality.' [An odd phrase. Solid seems to imply something fixed. We should hardly talk of a *solid* bridge of boats, though they might afford tolerably safe footing.] 'Though the admission of this principle may sometimes afford a cloke to changes of opinion that do not result from the purest motives; yet the admission of a contrary principle would be productive of infinitely worse consequences. The phrase of existing circumstances has, I believe, not unfrequently created a smile in the English House of Commons; but the smile should have been reserved for the application of the phrase and not have been excited by the phrase itself.' [He teaches us to smile by the book.] 'A very frequent repetition of it, has indeed, of itself, rather a suspicious air; and its application should always be watched with the most jealous and anxious attention; but no man ought to be judged *in limine* for saying, that existing circumstances had obliged him to alter his opinions and conduct. The country gentlemen were perhaps too easily convinced that existing circumstances called upon them to give up some of the most valuable privileges of Englishmen; but, as far as they were really convinced of this obligation, they acted consistently with the *clearest rule* of morality.' [Begging the learned writer's pardon, it is rather the exception than the rule. Did Junius Brutus, when he killed his son, act in conformity to the *clearest rule of morality*? Mr. Malthus has not quite got rid of the leaven of his old philosophy.]

'The degree of power to be given to the civil government, and the measure of our submission to it, must be determined by general expediency.'

This is saying a good deal. The rule which Mr. Malthus then lays down for 'a rising of the people,' seems to be that when they are enlightened and well off, that is, when the government is a

good one, they may rebel against it: but when they are kept in a state of ignorance and want, then they are to blame, if they are at all refractory: they are to be considered as the causes of that very oppression which they are endeavouring to resist, and as giving a farther handle to that tyranny, which their superiors are thus forced to exercise in self-defence, not from any innate love of power, or predilection for violent measures.

'All improvements in government must necessarily originate with persons of some education, and these will of course be found among the people of property. Whatever may be said of a few, it is impossible that the great mass of the people of property should be really interested in the abuses of government. They merely submit to them, from the fear, that an endeavour to remove them, might be productive of greater evils. Could we but take away this fear, reform and improvement would proceed with as much facility, as the removal of nuisances, or the paving and lighting the streets. Remove all apprehension from the tyranny or folly of the people, and the tyranny of government could not stand a moment. It would then appear in its proper deformity, without palliation, without pretext, without protector. Naturally feeble in itself, when it was once stripped naked, and deprived of the support of public opinion, and of the great *plea of necessity*, it would fall without a struggle.'

This is a new view of the subject. What then, mankind are governed by the pure love of justice! The people of property and education have no vices or follies of their own, which blind their understandings, no prejudices about royalty, or aristocracy, or church or state, no attachment to party, no dependence on great men, no hopes of preferment, no connections, no privileges, no interest in the abuses of government, no pride, none of the *esprit de corps*, to hinder them from pronouncing sentence on the laws, institutions, uses, and abuses of society with the same calmness, disinterestedness, and wisdom, as they would upon cleaning a sewer, or paving a street.

'The most successful supporters of tyranny are without doubt those general declaimers, who attribute the distresses of the poor, and almost all the evils to which society is subject, to human institutions and the iniquity of governments.'

This is like those highwaymen, who attribute their ill treatment of their victims to the resistance they make.

'Whatever therefore may be the intention of those indiscriminate and wholesale accusations against governments, their real effect undoubtedly is, to add a weight of talents and principles to the prevailing power which it never would have received otherwise.'

This is possible: but the effect of Mr. Malthus's method would be

that they would not want the additional weight either of talents or principle, but would laugh in your face.

'The inference, therefore, which Mr. Paine and others have drawn against governments from the unhappiness of the people, is palpably unfair; and before we give a sanction to such accusations, it is a debt we owe to truth and justice, to ascertain how much of this unhappiness arises from the principle of population, and how much is fairly to be attributed to government. When this distinction has been properly made, and all the vague, indefinite, and false accusations removed, government would remain, as it ought to be, clearly responsible for the rest. A tenfold weight would be immediately given to the cause of the people, and every man of principle would join in asserting and enforcing, if necessary, their rights.'

Timeo Danaos, et dona ferentes. Our author here wishes to delay the question in order to give additional weight to the cause of the people. This is something as if upon a stranger coming into a house almost fainting with hunger and cold, we should advise him not to go near the fire, nor take any thing to eat, for that there is a great apothecary in the neighbourhood who sometimes calls in about that time of the day, who will be able to tell him exactly how much of his illness proceeds from cold, and how much from hunger, whether he should eat, or warm himself first, and how the one would assist the other. The man might naturally answer, I know that I am very cold and hungry: I will therefore first sit down by the fire, and if, in the mean time, you can let me have any thing to eat, I shall be heartily glad of it. Otherwise the advice of the apothecary will come too late.

'I cannot help thinking, therefore, that a knowledge generally circulated, that the principal cause of want and unhappiness is unconnected with government, and totally beyond its power to remove would, instead of giving any advantage to governments, give a great additional weight to the popular side of the question, by removing the dangers with which, from ignorance, it is at present accompanied: and thus tend, in a very powerful manner, to promote the cause of rational freedom.'

The mode in which Mr. Malthus strengthens the popular side is by disarming it of all power or pretence for resistance. Undoubtedly that must be a strange sort of strength which is founded on impotence. The people are only secure against the encroachments of power from their inability to resist it. This is like clapping a man into a dungeon to save him from the pursuit of his creditors. Mr. Malthus promotes the cause of rational freedom, as the husband secured the virtue of his wife in the sign of the Good Woman.

Mr. Malthus's plan for the abolition of the poor laws is as follows:

'I should propose a regulation to be made, declaring, that no child born from any marriage, taking place after the expiration of a year from the date of the law; and no illegitimate child born two years from the same date, should ever be entitled to parish assistance. And to give a more general knowledge of this law, and to enforce it more strongly on the minds of the lower classes of people, the clergyman of each parish should after the publication of banns, read a short address, stating the strong obligation on every man to support his own children; the impropriety, and even immorality, of marrying without a fair prospect of being able to do this; the evils which had resulted to the poor themselves, from the attempt which had been made to assist by public institutions in a duty which ought to be exclusively appropriated to parents; and the absolute necessity which had at length appeared, of abandoning all such institutions, on account of their producing effects totally opposite to those which were intended.

'This would operate as a fair, distinct, and precise notice, which no man could well mistake; and without pressing hard on any particular individuals, would at once throw off the rising generation from that miserable and helpless dependence upon the government and the rich, the moral as well as physical consequences of which are almost incalculable.

'After the public notice which I have proposed had been given, and the system of poor laws had ceased with regard to the rising generation, if any man chose to marry, without a prospect of being able to support a family, he should have the most perfect liberty so to do. Though to marry, in this case, is in my opinion clearly an immoral act, yet it is not one which society can justly take upon itself to prevent or punish; because the punishment provided for it by the laws of nature, falls directly, and most severely upon the individual who commits the act, and through him, only more remotely and feebly on the society. When nature will govern and punish for us, it is a very miserable ambition to wish to snatch the rod from her hands, and draw upon ourselves the odium of executioner. To the punishment therefore of nature he should be left, the punishment of severe want. He has erred in the face of a most clear and precise warning, and can have no just reason to complain of any person but himself, when he feels the consequences of his error. All parish assistance should be most rigidly denied him: and if the hand of private charity be stretched forth in his relief, the interests of humanity imperiously require that it should be administered very

sparingly. He should be taught to know that the laws of nature, which are the laws of God, had doomed him and his family to starve for disobeying their repeated admonitions;' [nay his family had no hand in disobeying these admonitions] 'that he had no claim of *right* on society for the smallest portion of food, beyond that which his labour would fairly purchase; and that if he and his family were saved from suffering the extremities of hunger, he would owe it to the pity of some kind benefactor, to whom, therefore, he ought to be bound by the strongest ties of gratitude.

'If this system were pursued, we need be under no apprehensions that the number of persons in extreme want would be beyond the power and the will of the benevolent to supply. The sphere for the exercise of private charity would, I am confident, be less than it is at present; and the only difficulty would be, to restrain the hand of benevolence from assisting those in distress in so indiscriminate a manner as to encourage indolence and want of foresight in others.'

I am not sorry that I am at length come to this passage. It will I hope decide the reader's opinion of the benevolence, wisdom, piety, candour, and disinterested simplicity of Mr. Malthus's mind. Any comments that I might make upon it to strengthen this impression must be faint and feeble. I give up the task of doing justice to the moral beauties that pervade every line of it, in despair. There are some instances of an heroical contempt for the narrow prejudices of the world, of a perfect refinement from the vulgar feelings of human nature, that must only suffer by a comparison with any thing else.

Mr. Malthus prefaces his plan by saying,

'I have reflected much on the subject of the poor laws, and hope therefore that I shall be excused in venturing to suggest a mode of their gradual abolition, to which I confess that at present I can see no material objection. Of this indeed I feel nearly convinced, that should we ever become sufficiently sensible of the wide-spreading tyranny, dependence, indolence, and unhappiness, which they create, as seriously to make an effort to abolish them, we shall be compelled by a sense of justice to adopt the principle, if not the plan, which I shall mention. It seems impossible to get rid of so extensive a system of support, consistently with humanity, without applying ourselves directly to its vital principle, and endeavouring to counteract that deeply-seated cause, which occasions the rapid growth of all such establishments, and invariably renders them inadequate to their object. As a previous step even to any considerable alteration in the present system, which would contract, or stop the increase of the relief to be given, it appears to me that we are bound in justice and honour formally to disclaim the *right* of the poor to support.'

Now I shall not myself be so uncandid as not to confess, that I think the poor laws bad things; and that it would be well, if they could be got rid of, consistently with humanity and justice. This I do not think they could in the present state of things and other circumstances remaining as they are. The reason why I object to Mr. Malthus's plan is that it does not go to the root of the evil, or attack it in its principle, but its effects. He confounds the cause with the effect. The wide spreading tyranny, dependence, indolence, and unhappiness of which Mr. Malthus is so sensible, are not occasioned by the increase of the poor-rates, but these are the natural consequence of that increasing tyranny, dependence, indolence, and unhappiness occasioned by other causes.

Mr. Malthus desires his readers to look at the enormous proportion in which the poor-rates have increased within the last ten years. But have they increased in any greater proportion than the other taxes, which rendered them necessary, and which I think were employed for much more mischievous purposes? I would ask, what have the poor got by their encroachments for the last ten years? Do they work less hard? Are they better fed? Do they marry oftener, and with better prospects? Are they grown pampered and insolent? Have they changed places with the rich? Have they been cunning enough, by means of the poor-laws, to draw off all their wealth and superfluities from the men of property? Have they got so much as a quarter of an hour's leisure, a farthing candle, or a cheese-paring more than they had? Has not the price of provisions risen enormously? Has not the price of labour almost stood still? Have not the government and the rich had their way in every thing? Have they not gratified their ambition, their pride, their obstinacy, their ruinous extravagance? Have they not squandered the resources of the country as they pleased? Have they not heaped up wealth on themselves, and their dependents? Have they not multiplied sinecures, places, and pensions? Have they not doubled the salaries of those that existed before? Has there been any want of new creations of peers, who would thus be impelled to beget heirs to their titles and estates, and saddle the younger branches of their rising families, by means of their new influence, on the country at large? Has there been any want of contracts, of loans, of monopolies of corn, of good understanding between the rich and the powerful to assist one another, and to fleece the poor? Have the poor prospered? Have the rich declined? What then have they to complain of? What ground is there for the apprehension, that wealth is secretly changing hands, and that the whole property of the country will shortly be absorbed in the poor's fund? Do not the poor create their own fund? Is not

the necessity for such a fund first occasioned by the unequal weight with which the rich press upon the poor, and has not the increase of that fund in the last ten years been occasioned by the additional exorbitant demands, which have been made upon the poor and industrious, which without some assistance from the public they could not possibly have answered? Whatever is the increase in the nominal amount of the poor's fund, will not the rich always be able ultimately to throw the burthen of it on the poor themselves? But Mr. Malthus is a man of general principles. He cares little about these circumstantial details, and petty objections. He takes higher ground. He deduces all his conclusions, by an infallible logic, from the laws of God and nature. When our Essayist shall prove to me, that by these paper bullets of the brain, by his ratios of the increase of food and the increase of mankind, he has prevented one additional tax, or taken off one oppressive duty, that he has made a single rich man retrench one article at his table, that he has made him keep a dog or a horse the less, or part with a single vice, arguing from a mathematical admeasurement of the size of the earth, and the number of inhabitants it can contain, he shall have my perfect leave to disclaim the right of the poor to subsistence, and to tie them down by severe penalties to their good behaviour on the same profound principles. But why does Mr. Malthus practise his demonstrations on the poor only? Why are they to have a perfect system of rights and duties prescribed to them? I do not see why they alone should be put to live on these *metaphysical* board-wages, why they should be forced to submit to a course of *abstraction*; or why it should be meat and drink to them, more than to others, to do the will of God. Mr. Malthus's gospel is preached only to the poor!—Even if I approved of our author's plan, I should object to the principle on which it is founded. The parson of the parish, when a poor man comes to be married—No, not so fast. The author does not say, whether the lecture he proposes is to be read to the poor only, or to all ranks of people. Would it not sound oddly, if when the squire, who is himself worth a hundred thousand pounds, is going to be married to the rector's daughter, who is to have fifty, the curate should read them a formal lecture on their obligation to maintain their own children, and not turn them on the parish? Would it be necessary to go through the form of the address, when an amorous couple of eighty presented themselves at the altar? If the admonition were left to the parson's own discretion, what affronts would he not subject himself to, from his neglect of old maids, and superannuated widows, and from his applying himself familiarly to the little shopkeeper, or thriving mechanic? Well then let us suppose

that a very poor hard-working man comes to be married, and that the clergyman can take the liberty with him: he is to warn him first against fornication, and in the next place against matrimony. These are the two greatest sins which a poor man can commit, who can neither be supposed to keep his wife, nor his girl. Mr. Malthus, however, does not think them equal: for he objects strongly to a country fellow's marrying a girl whom he has debauched, or, as the phrase is, making an honest woman of her, as aggravating the crime, because by this means the parish will probably have three or four children to maintain instead of one. However, as it seems rather too late to recommend fornication or any thing else to a man who is actually come to be married (he must be a strange sawney who could turn back at the church-door after bringing a pretty rosy girl to hear a lecture on the principle of population) it is most natural to suppose that he would marry the young woman in spite of this principle. Here then he errs in the face of a precise warning, and should be left to the punishment of *nature*, the punishment of severe want. When he begins to feel the consequences of his error, all parish assistance is to be rigidly denied him, and the interests of humanity imperiously require that all other assistance should be withheld from him, or most sparingly administered. In the mean time to reconcile him to this treatment, and let him see that he has nobody to complain of but himself, the parson of the parish comes to him with the certificate of his marriage, and a copy of the warning he had given him at the time, by which he is taught to know that the laws of nature, which are the laws of God, had doomed him and his family to starve for disobeying their repeated admonitions; that he had no claim of right to the smallest portion of food beyond what his labour would actually purchase; and that he ought to kiss the feet and lick the dust off the shoes of him, who gave him a reprieve from the just sentence which the laws of God and nature had passed upon him. To make this clear to him, it would be necessary to put the Essay on Population into his hands, to instruct him in the nature of a geometrical and arithmetical series, in the necessary limits to population from the size of the earth, and here would come in Mr. Malthus's plan of education for the poor, writing, arithmetic, the use of the globes, &c. for the purpose of proving to them the necessity of their being starved. It cannot be supposed that the poor man (what with his poverty and what with being priest-ridden) should be able to resist this body of evidence, he would open his eyes to his error, and 'would submit to the sufferings that were absolutely irremediable with the fortitude of a man, and the resignation of a Christian.' He and his family might then be sent round the parish in a starving condition, accompanied by

the constables and *quondam* overseers of the poor, to see that no person, blind to 'the interests of humanity,' practised upon them the abominable deception of attempting to relieve their remediless sufferings, and by the parson of the parish to point out to the spectators the inevitable consequences of sinning against the laws of God and man. By celebrating a number of these *Auto da fes* yearly in every parish, the greatest publicity would be given to the principle of population, 'the strict line of duty would be pointed out to every man,' enforced by the most powerful sanctions, justice and humanity would flourish, they would be understood to signify that the poor have no right to live by their labour, and that the feelings of compassion and benevolence are best shewn by denying them charity, the poor would no longer be dependent on the rich, the rich could no longer wish to reduce the poor into a more complete subjection to their will, all causes of contention, of jealousy, and of irritation would have ceased between them, the struggle would be over, each class would fulfil the task assigned by heaven, the rich would oppress the poor without remorse, the poor would submit to oppression with a pious gratitude and resignation, the greatest harmony would prevail between the government and the people, there would be no longer any seditions, tumults, complaints, petitions, partisans of liberty, or tools of power, no grumbling, no repining, no discontented men of talents proposing reforms, and frivolous remedies, but we should all have the same gaiety and lightness of heart, and the same happy spirit of resignation that a man feels when he is seized with the plague, who thinks no more of the physician, but knows that his disorder is without cure. The best laid schemes are subject, however, to unlucky reverses. Some such seem to lie in the way of that pleasing Euthanasia, and contented submission to the grinding law of necessity, projected by Mr. Malthus. We might never reach the philosophic temper of the inhabitants of modern Greece and Turkey in this respect. Many little things might happen to interrupt our progress, if we were put into ever so fair a train. For instance, the men might perhaps be talked over by the parson, and their understandings being convinced by the geometrical and arithmetical ratios, or at least so far puzzled, that they would have nothing to say for themselves, they might prepare to submit to their fate with a tolerable grace. But I am afraid that the women might prove refractory. They never will hearken to reason, and are much more governed by their feelings than by calculations. While the husband was instructing his wife in the principles of population, she might probably answer that she did not see why her children should starve when the squire's lady, or the parson's lady kept half a dozen lap-dogs, and that it was but the

other day that being at the hall, or the parsonage house, she heard Miss declare that not one of the brood that were just littered should be drowned—It was *so inhuman* to kill the poor little things—Surely the children of the poor are as good as puppy-dogs! Was it not a week ago that the rector had a new pack of terriers sent down, and did I not hear the squire swear a tremendous oath, that he would have Mr. Such-a-one's fine hunter, if it cost him a hundred guineas? Half that sum would save us from ruin.—After this curtain-lecture, I conceive that the husband might begin to doubt the force of the demonstrations he had read and heard, and the next time his clerical monitor came, might pluck up courage to question the matter with him; and as we of the male sex, though dull of apprehension, are not slow at taking a hint, and can draw tough inferences from it, it is not impossible but the parson might be *gravelled*. In consequence of these accidents happening more than once, it would be buzzed about that the laws of God and nature, on which so many families had been doomed to starve, were not so clear as had been pretended. This would soon get wind among the mob: and at the next grand procession of the Penitents of famine, headed by Mr. Malthus in person, some discontented man of talents, who could not bear the distresses *of others* with the fortitude of a man and the resignation of a Christian, might undertake to question Mr. Malthus, whether the laws of nature or of God, to which he had piously sacrificed so many victims, signified any thing more than the limited extent of the earth, and the natural impossibility of providing for more than a limited number of human beings; and whether those laws could be justly put in force, to the very letter, while the actual produce of the earth, by being better husbanded, or more equally distributed, or given to men and not to beasts, might maintain in comfort double the number that actually existed, and who, not daring to demand a *fair* proportion of the produce of their labour, humbly crave charity, and are refused out of regard to the interests of justice and humanity. Our philosopher, at this critical juncture not being able to bring into the compass of a few words all the history, metaphysics, morality and divinity, or all the intricacies, subtleties, and callous equivocations contained in his quarto volume, might hesitate and be confounded—his own feelings and prejudices might add to his perplexity—his interrogator might persist in his question—the mob might become impatient for an answer, and not finding one to their minds, might proceed to extremities. Our unfortunate Essayist (who by that time would have become a bishop) might be ordered to the lamp-post, and his book committed to the flames.—I tremble to think of what would follow:—the poor laws would be again renewed, and the poor

no longer doomed to starve by the laws of God and nature! Some such, I apprehend, might be the consequence of attempting to enforce the abolition of the poor-laws, the extinction of private charity, and of instructing the poor in their metaphysical rights. In a few years time it is probable, however, that no such consequences would follow. In that time, if Mr. Malthus's systematic ardour will let him wait so long, they may be gradually crushed low enough in the scale of existence to be ripe for the ironical benefits, and sarcastic instruction prepared for them. Mr. Malthus says,

'The scanty relief granted to persons in distress, the capricious and insulting manner in which it is sometimes distributed by the overseers, and the natural and becoming pride not yet quite extinct among the peasantry of England, have deterred the more thinking and virtuous part of them, from venturing on marriage, without some better prospect of maintaining their families, than mere parish assistance. The desire of bettering our condition and the fear of making it worse, like the *vis medicatrix naturæ* in physics, is the *vis medicatrix reipublicæ* in politics, and is continually counteracting the disorders arising from narrow human institutions. In spite of the prejudices in favour of population, and the direct encouragements to marriage from the poor laws, it operates as a preventive check to increase; and happy for this country is it that it does so.'

If then this natural repugnance in the poor to subject themselves to the necessity of parish relief has ceased to operate, must it not be owing to extreme distress, or to the degradation of character, consequent upon it? How does Mr. Malthus propose to remedy this? By subjecting them to severe distress, and *teaching them patience under their sufferings*. But the rational desire of bettering our condition and the fear of making it worse is not increased by its being made worse. The standard of our notions of decency and comfort is not raised by a familiarity with unmitigated wretchedness, nor is the love of independence heightened by insults, and contempt, and by a formal mockery of the principles of justice and humanity. On the previous habits and character of the people, it is, however, that the degree of misery incurred always depends, as far as relates to themselves. The consequence of an effectual abolition of the poor laws would be all the immediate misery that would be produced, aggravated by the additional depression, and proneness to misery in the lower classes, and a beautiful petrefaction of all the common feelings of human nature in the higher ones. Finally, I agree with Mr. Malthus, that, 'if, as in Ireland and in Spain, and many of the southern countries, the people be in so degraded a state, as to propagate their species like brutes, it matters little, whether they have poor laws or not. Misery in all its

various forms must be the predominant check to their increase: and with, or without poor laws, no stretch of human ingenuity and exertion could rescue the people from the most extreme poverty and wretchedness.'

As to the metaphysical subtleties, by which Mr. Malthus endeavours to prove that we ought systematically to visit the sins of the father on the children, and keep up the stock of vice and misery in the family (from which it would follow, that the children of thieves and robbers ought either to be hanged outright, or at least brought up in such a manner as to ensure their following the fate of their parents) I feel and know my own superiority on that ground so well, that it would be ungenerous to push it farther. Mr. Malthus has a curious chapter on old maids. He might have written one on suicides, and another on prostitutes. As far as the question of population is concerned, they are certainly of more service to the community, because they tempt others to follow their example, whereas an old maid is a beacon to frighten others into matrimony. But this, says our author, is owing to unjust prejudice. I shall give the reader some of his arguments, as otherwise he might not guess at them.

'It is not enough to abolish all the positive institutions which encourage population; but we must endeavour, at the same time, to correct the prevailing opinions, which have the same, or perhaps even a more powerful, effect. The matron who has reared a family of ten or twelve children, and whose sons, perhaps, may be fighting the battles of their country, is apt to think that society owes her much; and this imaginary debt, society is, in general, fully inclined to acknowledge. But if the subject be fairly considered, and the respected matron weighed in the scales of justice against the neglected old maid, it is possible that the matron might kick the beam. She will appear rather in the character of a monopolist, than of a great benefactor to the state. If she had not married and had so many children, other members of the society might have enjoyed this satisfaction; and there is no particular reason for supposing that her sons would fight better for their country than the sons of other women. She has therefore rather subtracted from, than added to, the happiness of the other part of society. The old maid, on the contrary, has exalted others by depressing herself. Her self-denial has made room for another marriage, without any additional distress; and she has not, like the generality of men, in avoiding one error, fallen into its opposite. She has really and truly contributed more to the happiness of the rest of the society arising from the pleasures of marriage, than if she had entered into this union herself, and had besides portioned twenty maidens with a hundred pounds each; whose particular

happiness would have been balanced, either by an increase in the general difficulties of rearing children and getting employment, or by the necessity of celibacy in twenty other maidens somewhere else. Like the truly benevolent man in an irremediable scarcity, she has diminished her own consumption, instead of raising up a few particular people, by pressing down the rest. On a fair comparison, therefore, she seems to have a better founded claim to the gratitude of society than the matron. Whether we could always completely sympathize with the motives of her conduct, has not much to do with the question. The particular motive which influenced the matron to marry, was certainly not the good of her country. To refuse a proper tribute of respect to the old maid, because she was not directly influenced in her conduct by the desire of conferring on society a certain benefit, which, though it must undoubtedly exist, must necessarily be so diffused as to be invisible to her, is in the highest degree impolitic and unjust. It is expecting a strain of virtue beyond humanity. If we never reward any persons with our approbation, but those who are exclusively influenced by motives of general benevolence, this powerful encouragement to do good actions will not be very often called into exercise.'

Mr. Malthus would make an excellent superior of a convent of nuns of the Order of Population.—The better to remove what he considers as an unjust stigma on old maids; he has endeavoured to set one on married women. He would persuade every one to look upon his mother as a person of bad character. He would pass an act of bastardy on every mother's son of us; and prove that we come into the world without a proper license (from him) merely to gratify the coarse, selfish, immoral propensities of our parents. Till however he can do away the filial relation, or the respect attached to it, or so contrive it that all men should be 'born of a virgin' contrary to all our experience, it will I believe be impossible to get rid of the unjust prejudice against old maids, or to place them on a level with married women. Mr. Malthus has gone the wrong way to ingratiate himself with the mothers of families: but he has not taken his measures ill. He knows that the partiality and favours of such persons are generally confined to run in their own low, narrow, domestic channels. But this is not the case with those reverend persons, to whom he pays his court. He knows that their bounty is not confined by any such selfish limits, it flows liberally to all, and they have the best chance of sharing in it, who endeavour to indemnify them for their personal sacrifices, or the ridicule of the world by a succession of little agreeable attentions, or by offering theoretical incense to their virtue and merit.

'It is perfectly absurd as well as unjust, that a giddy girl of sixteen should, because she is married be considered by the forms of society as the protector of women of thirty, should come first into the room, should be assigned the highest place at table, and be the prominent figure to whom the attentions of the company are more particularly addressed.'—Not more absurd than that a child or an ideot should be a king, or that a grave man of fifty should call a young coxcomb, My lord. Our sophist would overturn all the established order of society with his out-of-the-way principles.—Mr. Malthus has huddled into the same chapter his attack on the monopoly made by the married women of the men, and his defence of the monopoly of corn by farmers and others. It is the last passage I shall quote, though there are many others worthy of rebuke.

'In some conversations with labouring men during the late scarcities, I confess that I was to the last degree disheartened, at observing their inveterate prejudices on the subject of grain: and I felt very strongly the almost absolute incompatibility of a government really free, with such a degree of ignorance. The delusions are of such a nature, that, if acted upon, they must, at all events, be repressed by force: and it is extremely difficult to give such a power to the government as will be sufficient at all times for this purpose, without the risk of its being employed improperly, and endangering the liberty of the subject. And this reflection cannot but be disheartening to every friend to freedom.

'It is of the very utmost importance, that the gentlemen of the country, and particularly the clergy, should not, from ignorance, aggravate the evils of scarcity every time that it unfortunately occurs. During the late dearths, half of the gentlemen and clergymen in the kingdom richly deserved to have been prosecuted for sedition. After inflaming the minds of the common people against the farmers and corn-dealers, by the manner in which they talked of them, or preached about them, it was but a feeble antidote to the poison which they had infused, coldly to observe, that however the poor might be oppressed or cheated, it was their duty to keep the peace. It was little better than Antony's repeated declaration, that the conspirators were all honourable men; which did not save either their houses or their persons from the attacks of the mob. Political economy is perhaps the only science of which it might be said, that the ignorance of it is not merely a deprivation of good, but produces great positive evil.'

I shall accompany this passage with an extract from the Author's first edition and leave it to the reader to apply the hint of Antony's speech to whom he thinks fit.

'It very rarely happens that the nominal price of labour universally falls; but we well know that it frequently remains the same, while the nominal price of provisions has been gradually increasing. This is, in effect, a real fall in the price of labour; and during this period, the condition of the lower orders of the community must gradually grow worse and worse. But the farmers and the capitalists are growing rich from the real cheapness of labour. Their increased capitals enable them to employ a greater number of men. Work therefore may be plentiful; and the price of labour would consequently rise. But the want of freedom in the market of labour, which occurs more or less in all communities, either from parish laws, or the more general cause of the facility of combination among the rich, and its difficulty among the poor, operates to prevent the price of labour from rising at the natural period, and keeps it down some time longer; perhaps, till a year of scarcity, when the clamour is too loud, and the necessity too apparent to be resisted.

'The true cause of the advance in the price of labour is thus concealed; and the rich affect to grant it as an act of compassion and favour to the poor, in consideration of a year of scarcity; and when plenty returns, indulge themselves in the most unreasonable of all complaints, that the price does not again fall; when a little reflection would shew them, that it must have risen long before, but from an unjust conspiracy of their own.'

THE END

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Published anonymously in one volume (8vo, 424 pages) in 1825, with the following title-page :—'The Spirit of the Age : or Contemporary Portraits. "To know another well were to know one's self." London : Printed for Henry Colburn, New Burlington Street. 1825.' The imprint was 'London : Printed by S. and R. Bentley, Dorset Street.' A second edition (here reproduced), with the same title-page (except that the quotation ran : '"To know a man well, were to know himself." Hamlet') and imprint, was produced in smaller type (8vo, 408 pages) in the same year. In this edition the essays were arranged in a different order, an addition was made to the essay on Coleridge, and an essay on Cobbett from *Table Talk* (vol. i., 1821) was included. In the same year, 1825, an edition was published in Paris (A. and W. Galignani) which included the essay on Cobbett and an essay on Canning. The third edition, edited by the author's son, was published in 1858 (one volume, 8vo, 396 pages, C. Templeman, Great Portland Street). In this edition the essays on Cobbett and Canning were included, and the essays were arranged in an order different from that of either the first or the second edition. The fourth edition, edited by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt for Bohn's *Standard Library* (1886) restored the order of the second edition, but included the essay on Canning. In this edition Mr. Hazlitt made some alterations in the text based upon (1) portions of the original MSS. then in his possession, and (2) autograph notes of the author's in a copy of the second edition belonging to Mr. C. W. Reynell. A volume of *Essays selected from The Spirit of the Age*, with an introduction by R. B. Johnson, was published in 1893 (the Knickerbocker Press, G. P. Putnam's Sons). Five of the essays, viz. : those on Bentham, Irving, Horne Tooke, Scott, and Eldon were originally published in Colburn's *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* (1824, vols. x. and xi.) in a series entitled 'The Spirits of the Age.'

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THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

JEREMY BENTHAM

Mr. Bentham is one of those persons who verify the old adage, that 'A prophet has most honour out of his own country.' His reputation lies at the circumference; and the lights of his understanding are reflected, with increasing lustre, on the other side of the globe. His name is little known in England, better in Europe, best of all in the plains of Chili and the mines of Mexico. He has offered constitutions for the New World, and legislated for future times. The people of Westminster, where he lives, hardly dream of such a person; but the Siberian savage has received cold comfort from his lunar aspect, and may say to him with Caliban—'I know thee, and thy dog and thy bush!' The tawny Indian may hold out the hand of fellowship to him across the Great Pacific. We believe that the Empress Catherine corresponded with him; and we know that the Emperor Alexander called upon him, and presented him with his miniature in a gold snuff-box, which the philosopher, to his eternal honour, returned. Mr. Hobhouse is a greater man at the hustings, Lord Rolle at Plymouth Dock; but Mr. Bentham would carry it hollow, on the score of popularity, at Paris or Pegu. The reason is, that our author's influence is purely intellectual. He has devoted his life to the pursuit of abstract and general truths, and to those studies—

'That waft a *thought* from Indus to the Pole'—

and has never mixed himself up with personal intrigues or party politics. He once, indeed, stuck up a hand-bill to say that he (Jeremy Bentham) being of sound mind, was of opinion that Sir Samuel Romilly was the most proper person to represent Westminster; but this was the whim of the moment. Otherwise, his reasonings, if true at all, are true everywhere alike: his speculations concern humanity at large, and are not confined to the hundred or the bills of mortality. It is in moral as in physical magnitude. The little is seen best near: the great appears in its proper dimensions, only from

a more commanding point of view, and gains strength with time, and elevation from distance!

Mr. Bentham is very much among philosophers what La Fontaine was among poets:—in general habits and in all but his professional pursuits, he is a mere child. He has lived for the last forty years in a house in Westminster, overlooking the Park, like an anchoret in his cell, reducing law to a system, and the mind of man to a machine. He scarcely ever goes out, and sees very little company. The favoured few, who have the privilege of the *entrée*, are always admitted one by one. He does not like to have witnesses to his conversation. He talks a great deal, and listens to nothing but facts. When any one calls upon him, he invites them to take a turn round his garden with him (Mr. Bentham is an economist of his time, and sets apart this portion of it to air and exercise)—and there you may see the lively old man, his mind still buoyant with thought and with the prospect of futurity, in eager conversation with some Opposition Member, some expatriated Patriot, or Transatlantic Adventurer, urging the extinction of Close Boroughs, or planning a code of laws for some 'lone island in the watery waste,' his walk almost amounting to a run, his tongue keeping pace with it in shrill, cluttering accents, negligent of his person, his dress, and his manner, intent only on his grand theme of UTILITY—or pausing, perhaps, for want of breath and with lack-lustre eye to point out to the stranger a stone in the wall at the end of his garden (overarched by two beautiful cotton-trees) *Inscribed to the Prince of Poets*, which marks the house where Milton formerly lived. To show how little the refinements of taste or fancy enter into our author's system, he proposed at one time to cut down these beautiful trees, to convert the garden where he had breathed the air of Truth and Heaven for near half a century into a paltry *Chrestomathic School*, and to make Milton's house (the cradle of Paradise Lost) a thoroughfare, like a three-stalled stable, for the idle rabble of Westminster to pass backwards and forwards to it with their cloven hoofs. Let us not, however, be getting on too fast—Milton himself taught school! There is something not altogether dissimilar between Mr. Bentham's appearance, and the portraits of Milton, the same silvery tone, a few dishevelled hairs, a peevish, yet puritanical expression, an irritable temperament corrected by habit and discipline. Or in modern times, he is something between Franklin and Charles Fox, with the comfortable double-chin and sleek thriving look of the one, and the quivering lip, the restless eye, and animated acuteness of the other. His eye is quick and lively; but it glances not from object to object, but from thought to thought. He is evidently a man occupied with some train of fine

and inward association. He regards the people about him no more than the flies of a summer. He meditates the coming age. He hears and sees only what suits his purpose, or some 'foregone conclusion'; and looks out for facts and passing occurrences in order to put them into his logical machinery and grind them into the dust and powder of some subtle theory, as the miller looks out for grist to his mill! Add to this physiognomical sketch the minor points of costume, the open shirt-collar, the single-breasted coat, the old fashioned half-boots and ribbed stockings; and you will find in Mr. Bentham's general appearance a singular mixture of boyish simplicity and of the venerableness of age. In a word, our celebrated jurist presents a striking illustration of the difference between the *philosophical* and the *regal* look; that is, between the merely abstracted and the merely personal. There is a lack-adaisical *bonhommie* about his whole aspect, none of the fierceness of pride or power; an unconscious neglect of his own person, instead of a stately assumption of superiority; a good-humoured, placid intelligence, instead of a lynx-eyed watchfulness, as if it wished to make others its prey, or was afraid they might turn and rend him; he is a beneficent spirit, prying into the universe, not lording it over it; a thoughtful spectator of the scenes of life, or ruminator on the fate of mankind, not a painted pageant, a stupid idol set up on its pedestal of pride for men to fall down and worship with idiot fear and wonder at the thing themselves have made, and which, without that fear and wonder, would in itself be nothing!

Mr. Bentham, perhaps, over-rates the importance of his own theories. He has been heard to say (without any appearance of pride or affectation) that 'he should like to live the remaining years of his life, a year at a time at the end of the next six or eight centuries, to see the effect which his writings would by that time have had upon the world.' Alas! his name will hardly live so long! Nor do we think, in point of fact, that Mr. Bentham has given any new or decided impulse to the human mind. He cannot be looked upon in the light of a discoverer in legislation or morals. He has not struck out any great leading principle or parent-truth, from which a number of others might be deduced; nor has he enriched the common and established stock of intelligence with original observations, like pearls thrown into wine. One truth discovered is immortal, and entitles its author to be so: for, like a new substance in nature, it cannot be destroyed. But Mr. Bentham's *forte* is arrangement; and the form of truth, though not its essence, varies with time and circumstance. He has methodised, collated, and condensed all the materials prepared to his hand on the subjects

of which he treats, in a masterly and scientific manner; but we should find a difficulty in adducing from his different works (however elaborate or closely reasoned) any new element of thought, or even a new fact or illustration. His writings are, therefore, chiefly valuable as *books of reference*, as bringing down the account of intellectual inquiry to the present period, and disposing the results in a compendious, connected, and tangible shape; but books of reference are chiefly serviceable for facilitating the acquisition of knowledge, and are constantly liable to be superseded and to grow out of fashion with its progress, as the scaffolding is thrown down as soon as the building is completed. Mr. Bentham is not the first writer (by a great many) who has assumed the principle of UTILITY as the foundation of just laws, and of all moral and political reasoning:—his merit is, that he has applied this principle more closely and literally; that he has brought all the objections and arguments, more distinctly labelled and ticketted, under this one head, and made a more constant and explicit reference to it at every step of his progress, than any other writer. Perhaps the weak side of his conclusions also is, that he has carried this single view of his subject too far, and not made sufficient allowance for the varieties of human nature, and the caprices and irregularities of the human will. 'He has not allowed for the *wind*.' It is not that you can be said to see his favourite doctrine of Utility glittering everywhere through his system, like a vein of rich, shining ore (that is not the nature of the material)—but it might be plausibly objected that he had struck the whole mass of fancy, prejudice, passion, sense, whim, with his petrific, leaden mace, that he had 'bound volatile Hermes,' and reduced the theory and practice of human life to a *caput mortuum* of reason, and dull, plodding, technical calculation. The gentleman is himself a capital logician; and he has been led by this circumstance to consider man as a logical animal. We fear this view of the matter will hardly hold water. If we attend to the *moral* man, the constitution of his mind will scarcely be found to be built up of pure reason and a regard to consequences: if we consider the *criminal* man (with whom the legislator has chiefly to do) it will be found to be still less so.

Every pleasure, says Mr. Bentham, is equally a good, and is to be taken into the account as such in a moral estimate, whether it be the pleasure of sense or of conscience, whether it arise from the exercise of virtue or the perpetration of crime. We are afraid the human mind does not readily come into this doctrine, this *ultima ratio philosophorum*, interpreted according to the letter. Our moral sentiments are made up of sympathies and antipathies, of sense and imagination, of understanding and prejudice. The soul, by reason of its weakness,

is an aggregating and an exclusive principle; it clings obstinately to some things, and violently rejects others. And it must do so, in a great measure, or it would act contrary to its own nature. It needs helps and stages in its progress, and 'all appliances and means to boot,' which can raise it to a partial conformity to truth and good (the utmost it is capable of) and bring it into a tolerable harmony with the universe. By aiming at too much, by dismissing collateral aids, by extending itself to the farthest verge of the conceivable and possible, it loses its elasticity and vigour, its impulse and its direction. The moralist can no more do without the intermediate use of rules and principles, without the 'vantage ground of habit, without the levers of the understanding, than the mechanist can discard the use of wheels and pulleys, and perform every thing by simple motion. If the mind of man were competent to comprehend the whole of truth and good, and act upon it at once, and independently of all other considerations, Mr. Bentham's plan would be a feasible one, and *the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth*, would be the best possible ground to place morality upon. But it is not so. In ascertaining the rules of moral conduct, we must have regard not merely to the nature of the object, but to the capacity of the agent, and to his fitness for apprehending or attaining it. Pleasure is that which is so in itself: good is that which approves itself as such on reflection, or the idea of which is a source of satisfaction. All pleasure is not, therefore (morally speaking) equally a good; for all pleasure does not equally bear reflecting on. There are some tastes that are sweet in the mouth and bitter in the belly; and there is a similar contradiction and anomaly in the mind and heart of man.

Again, what would become of the *Posthæc meminisse juvabit* of the poet, if a principle of fluctuation and reaction is not inherent in the very constitution of our nature, or if all moral truth is a mere literal truism? We are not, then, so much to inquire what certain things are abstractedly or in themselves, as how they affect the mind, and to approve or condemn them accordingly. The same object seen near strikes us more powerfully than at a distance: things thrown into masses give a greater blow to the imagination than when scattered and divided into their component parts. A number of mole-hills do not make a mountain, though a mountain is actually made up of atoms: so moral truth must present itself under a certain aspect and from a certain point of view, in order to produce its full and proper effect upon the mind. The laws of the affections are as necessary as those of optics. A calculation of consequences is no more equivalent to a sentiment, than a *seriatim* enumeration of square yards or feet touches the fancy like the sight of the Alps or Andes.

To give an instance or two of what we mean. Those who on pure cosmopolite principles, or on the ground of abstract humanity, affect an extraordinary regard for the Turks and Tartars, have been accused of neglecting their duties to their friends and next-door neighbours. Well, then, what is the state of the question here? One human being is, no doubt, as much worth in himself, independently of the circumstances of time or place, as another; but he is not of so much value to us and our affections. Could our imagination take wing (with our speculative faculties) to the other side of the globe or to the ends of the universe, could our eyes behold whatever our reason teaches us to be possible, could our hands reach as far as our thoughts and wishes, we might then busy ourselves to advantage with the Hottentots, or hold intimate converse with the inhabitants of the Moon; but being as we are, our feelings evaporate in so large a space—we must draw the circle of our affections and duties somewhat closer—the heart hovers and fixes nearer home. It is true, the bands of private, or of local and natural affection, are often, nay in general, too tightly strained, so as frequently to do harm instead of good: but the present question is whether we can, with safety and effect, be wholly emancipated from them? Whether we should shake them off at pleasure and without mercy, as the only bar to the triumph of truth and justice? Or whether benevolence, constructed upon a logical scale, would not be merely *nominal*, whether duty, raised to too lofty a pitch of refinement, might not sink into callous indifference or hollow selfishness? Again, is it not to exact too high a strain from humanity, to ask us to qualify the degree of abhorrence we feel against a murderer by taking into our cool consideration the pleasure he may have in committing the deed, and in the prospect of gratifying his avarice or his revenge? We are hardly so formed as to sympathise at the same moment with the assassin and his victim. The degree of pleasure the former may feel, instead of extenuating, aggravates his guilt, and shows the depth of his malignity. Now the mind revolts against this by mere natural antipathy, if it is itself well-disposed; or the slow process of reason would afford but a feeble resistance to violence and wrong. The will, which is necessary to give consistency and promptness to our good intentions, cannot extend so much candour and courtesy to the antagonist principle of evil: virtue, to be sincere and practical, cannot be divested entirely of the blindness and impetuosity of passion! It has been made a plea (half jest, half earnest) for the horrors of war, that they promote trade and manufactures. It has been said, as a set-off for the atrocities practised upon the negro slaves in the West Indies, that without their blood and sweat, so many millions of people could not have sugar to sweeten

their tea. Fires and murders have been argued to be beneficial, as they serve to fill the newspapers, and for a subject to talk of—this is a sort of sophistry that it might be difficult to disprove on the bare scheme of contingent utility; but on the ground that we have stated, it must pass for mere irony. What the proportion between the good and the evil will really be found in any of the supposed cases, may be a question to the understanding; but to the imagination and the heart, that is, to the natural feelings of mankind, it admits of none!

Mr. Bentham, in adjusting the provisions of a penal code, lays too little stress on the co-operation of the natural prejudices of mankind, and the habitual feelings of that class of persons for whom they are more particularly designed. Legislators (we mean writers on legislation) are philosophers, and governed by their reason: criminals, for whose controul laws are made, are a set of desperadoes, governed only by their passions. What wonder that so little progress has been made towards a mutual understanding between the two parties! They are quite a different species, and speak a different language, and are sadly at a loss for a common interpreter between them. Perhaps the Ordinary of Newgate bids as fair for this office as any one. What should Mr. Bentham, sitting at ease in his arm-chair, composing his mind before he begins to write by a prelude on the organ, and looking out at a beautiful prospect when he is at a loss for an idea, know of the principles of action of rogues, outlaws, and vagabonds? No more than Montaigne of the motions of his cat! If sanguine and tender-hearted philanthropists have set on foot an inquiry into the barbarity and the defects of penal laws, the practical improvements have been mostly suggested by reformed cut-throats, turnkeys, and thief-takers. What even can the Honourable House, who when the Speaker has pronounced the well-known, wished-for sounds, 'That this house do now adjourn,' retire, after voting a royal crusade or a loan of millions, to lie on down, and feed on plate in spacious palaces, know of what passes in the hearts of wretches in garrets and night-cellars, petty pilferers and marauders, who cut throats and pick pockets with their own hands? The thing is impossible. The laws of the country are, therefore, ineffectual and abortive, because they are made by the rich for the poor, by the wise for the ignorant, by the respectable and exalted in station for the very scum and refuse of the community. If Newgate would resolve itself into a committee of the whole Press-yard, with Jack Ketch at its head, aided by confidential persons from the county prisons or the Hulks, and would make a clear breast, some *data* might be found out to proceed upon; but as it is, the *criminal mind* of the country is a book sealed, no one has been able to penetrate to the inside!

Mr. Bentham, in his attempts to revise and amend our criminal jurisprudence, proceeds entirely on his favourite principle of Utility. Convince highwaymen and housebreakers that it will be for their interest to reform, and they will reform and lead honest lives; according to Mr. Bentham. He says, 'All men act from calculation, even madmen reason.' And, in our opinion, he might as well carry this maxim to Bedlam or St. Luke's, and apply it to the inhabitants, as think to coerce or overawe the inmates of a gaol, or those whose practices make them candidates for that distinction, by the mere dry, detailed convictions of the understanding. Criminals are not to be influenced by reason; for it is of the very essence of crime to disregard consequences both to ourselves and others. You may as well preach philosophy to a drunken man, or to the dead, as to those who are under the instigation of any mischievous passion. A man is a drunkard, and you tell him he ought to be sober; he is debauched, and you ask him to reform; he is idle, and you recommend industry to him as his wisest course; he gambles, and you remind him that he may be ruined by this foible; he has lost his character, and you advise him to get into some reputable service or lucrative situation; vice becomes a habit with him, and you request him to rouse himself and shake it off; he is starving, and you warn him if he breaks the law, he will be hanged. None of this reasoning reaches the mark it aims at. The culprit, who violates and suffers the vengeance of the laws, is not the dupe of ignorance, but the slave of passion, the victim of habit or necessity. To argue with strong passion, with inveterate habit, with desperate circumstances, is to talk to the winds. Clownish ignorance may indeed be dispelled, and taught better; but it is seldom that a criminal is not aware of the consequences of his act, or has not made up his mind to the alternative. They are, in general, *too knowing by half*. You tell a person of this stamp what is his interest; he says he does not care about his interest, or the world and he differ on that particular. But there is one point on which he must agree with them, namely, what *they* think of his conduct, and that is the only hold you have of him. A man may be callous and indifferent to what happens to himself; but he is never indifferent to public opinion, or proof against open scorn and infamy. Shame, then, not fear, is the sheet-anchor of the law. He who is not afraid of being pointed at as a *thief*, will not mind a month's hard labour. He who is prepared to take the life of another, is already reckless of his own. But every one makes a sorry figure in the pillory; and the being launched from the New Drop lowers a man in his own opinion. The lawless and violent spirit, who is hurried by head-strong self-will to break the laws, does not like to have the ground of pride and

obstinacy struck from under his feet. This is what gives the *swells* of the metropolis such a dread of the *tread-mill*—it makes them ridiculous. It must be confessed, that this very circumstance renders the reform of criminals nearly hopeless. It is the apprehension of being stigmatized by public opinion, the fear of what will be thought and said of them, that deters men from the violation of the laws, while their character remains unimpeached; but honour once lost, all is lost. The man can never be himself again! A citizen is like a soldier, a part of a machine, who submits to certain hardships, privations, and dangers, not for his own ease, pleasure, profit, or even conscience, but—*for shame*. What is it that keeps the machine together in either case? Not punishment or discipline, but sympathy. The soldier mounts the breach or stands in the trenches, the peasant hedges and ditches, or the mechanic plies his ceaseless task, because the one will not be called a *coward*, the other a *rogue*: but let the one turn deserter and the other vagabond, and there is an end of him. The grinding law of necessity, which is no other than a name, a breath, loses its force; he is no longer sustained by the good opinion of others, and he drops out of his place in society, a useless clog! Mr. Bentham takes a culprit, and puts him into what he calls a *Panopticon*, that is, a sort of circular prison, with open cells, like a glass bee-hive. He sits in the middle, and sees all the other does. He gives him work to do, and lectures him if he does not do it. He takes liquor from him, and society and liberty; but he feeds and clothes him, and keeps him out of mischief; and when he has convinced him, by force and reason together, that this life is for his good, he turns him out upon the world a reformed man, and as confident of the success of his handy-work, as the shoemaker of that which he has just taken off the last, or the Parisian barber in Sterne, of the buckle of his wig. 'Dip it in the ocean,' said the perruquier, 'and it will stand!' But we doubt the durability of our projector's patchwork. Will our convert to the great principle of Utility work when he is from under Mr. Bentham's eye, because he was forced to work when under it? Will he keep sober, because he has been kept from liquor so long? Will he not return to loose company, because he has had the pleasure of sitting vis-à-vis with a philosopher of late? Will he not steal, now that his hands are untied? Will he not take the road, now that it is free to him? Will he not call his benefactor all the names he can set his tongue to, the moment his back is turned? All this is more than to be feared. The charm of criminal life, like that of savage life, consists in liberty, in hardship, in danger, and in the contempt of death, in one word, in extraordinary excitement; and he who has tasted of it, will no more return to regular

habits of life, than a man will take to water after drinking brandy, or than a wild beast will give over hunting its prey. Miracles never cease, to be sure; but they are not to be had wholesale, or *to order*. Mr. Owen, who is another of those proprietors and patentees of reform, has lately got an American savage with him, whom he carries about in great triumph and complacency, as an antithesis to his *New View of Society*, and as winding up his reasoning to what it mainly wanted, an epigrammatic point. Does the benevolent visionary of the Lanark cotton-mills really think this *natural man* will act as a foil to his *artificial man*? Does he for a moment imagine that his *Address to the higher and middle classes*, with all its advantages of fiction, makes any thing like so interesting a romance as *Hunter's Captivity among the North American Indians*? Has he any thing to show, in all the apparatus of New Lanark and its desolate monotony, to excite the thrill of imagination like the blankets made of wreaths of snow under which the wild wood-rovers bury themselves for weeks in winter? Or the skin of a leopard, which our hardy adventurer slew, and which served him for great-coat and bedding? Or the rattle-snake that he found by his side as a bedfellow? Or his rolling himself into a ball to escape from him? Or his suddenly placing himself against a tree to avoid being trampled to death by the herd of wild buffaloes, that came rushing on like the sound of thunder? Or his account of the huge spiders that prey on blue-bottles and gilded flies in green pathless forests; or of the great Pacific Ocean, that the natives look upon as the gulf that parts time from eternity, and that is to waft them to the spirits of their fathers? After all this, Mr. Hunter must find Mr. Owen and his parallelograms trite and flat, and will, we suspect, take an opportunity to escape from them!

Mr. Bentham's method of reasoning, though comprehensive and exact, labours under the defect of most systems—it is too *topical*. It includes every thing; but it includes every thing alike. It is rather like an inventory, than a valuation of different arguments. Every possible suggestion finds a place, so that the mind is distracted as much as enlightened by this perplexing accuracy. The exceptions seem as important as the rule. By attending to the minute, we overlook the great; and in summing up an account, it will not do merely to insist on the number of items without considering their amount. Our author's page presents a very nicely dove-tailed mosaic pavement of legal common-places. We slip and slide over its even surface without being arrested any where. Or his view of the human mind resembles a map, rather than a picture: the outline, the disposition is correct, but it wants colouring and relief. There is a technicality of manner, which renders his writings of more value

to the professional inquirer than to the general reader. Again, his style is unpopular, not to say unintelligible. He writes a language of his own, that *darkens knowledge*. His works have been translated into French—they ought to be translated into English. People wonder that Mr. Bentham has not been prosecuted for the boldness and severity of some of his invectives. He might wrap up high treason in one of his inextricable periods, and it would never find its way into Westminster-Hall. He is a kind of Manuscript author—he writes a cypher-hand, which the vulgar have no key to. The construction of his sentences is a curious frame-work with pegs and hooks to hang his thoughts upon, for his own use and guidance, but almost out of the reach of every body else. It is a barbarous philosophical jargon, with all the repetitions, parentheses, formalities, uncouth nomenclature and verbiage of law-Latin; and what makes it worse, it is not mere verbiage, but has a great deal of acuteness and meaning in it, which you would be glad to pick out if you could. In short, Mr. Bentham writes as if he was allowed but a single sentence to express his whole view of a subject in, and as if, should he omit a single circumstance or step of the argument, it would be lost to the world for ever, like an estate by a flaw in the title-deeds. This is over-rating the importance of our own discoveries, and mistaking the nature and object of language altogether. Mr. Bentham has *acquired* this disability—it is not natural to him. His admirable little work *On Usury*, published forty years ago, is clear, easy, and vigorous. But Mr. Bentham has shut himself up since then 'in nook monastic,' conversing only with followers of his own, or with 'men of Ind,' and has endeavoured to overlay his natural humour, sense, spirit, and style, with the dust and cobwebs of an obscure solitude. The best of it is, he thinks his present mode of expressing himself perfect, and that whatever may be objected to his law or logic, no one can find the least fault with the purity, simplicity, and perspicuity of his style.

Mr. Bentham, in private life, is an amiable and exemplary character. He is a little romantic, or so; and has dissipated part of a handsome fortune in practical speculations. He lends an ear to plausible projectors, and, if he cannot prove them to be wrong in their premises or their conclusions, thinks himself bound *in reason* to stake his money on the venture. Strict logicians are licenced visionaries. Mr. Bentham is half-brother to the late Mr. Speaker Abbott[1] —*Proh pudor!* He was educated at Eton, and still takes our novices to task about a passage in Homer, or a metre in Virgil. He was

[1] Now Lord Colchester.

afterwards at the University, and he has described the scruples of an ingenuous youthful mind about subscribing the articles, in a passage in his *Church-of-Englandism*, which smacks of truth and honour both, and does one good to read it in an age, when 'to be honest' (or not to laugh at the very idea of honesty) 'is to be one man picked out of ten thousand!' Mr. Bentham relieves his mind sometimes, after the fatigue of study, by playing on a fine old organ, and has a relish for Hogarth's prints. He turns wooden utensils in a lathe for exercise, and fancies he can turn men in the same manner. He has no great fondness for poetry, and can hardly extract a moral out of Shakespeare. His house is warmed and lighted by steam. He is one of those who prefer the artificial to the natural in most things, and think the mind of man omnipotent. He has a great contempt for out-of-door prospects, for green fields and trees, and is for referring every thing to Utility. There is a little narrowness in this; for if all the sources of satisfaction are taken away, what is to become of utility itself? It is, indeed, the great fault of this able and extraordinary man, that he has concentrated his faculties and feelings too entirely on one subject and pursuit, and has not 'looked enough abroad into universality.'[1]

WILLIAM GODWIN

The Spirit of the Age was never more fully shown than in its treatment of this writer—its love of paradox and change, its dastard submission to prejudice and to the fashion of the day. Five-and-twenty years ago he was in the very zenith of a sultry and unwholesome popularity; he blazed as a sun in the firmament of reputation; no one was more talked of, more looked up to, more sought after, and wherever liberty, truth, justice was the theme, his name was not far off:—now he has sunk below the horizon, and enjoys the serene twilight of a doubtful immortality. Mr. Godwin, during his lifetime, has secured to himself the triumphs and the mortifications of an extreme notoriety and of a sort of posthumous fame. His bark, after being tossed in the revolutionary tempest, now raised to heaven by all the fury of popular breath, now almost dashed in pieces, and buried in the quicksands of ignorance, or scorched with the lightning of momentary indignation, at length floats on the calm wave that is to bear it down the stream of time. Mr. Godwin's person is not known, he is not pointed out in the street, his conversation is not courted, his opinions are not asked, he is at the head of no cabal,

[1] Lord Bacon's Advancement of Learning.

he belongs to no party in the State, he has no train of admirers, no one thinks it worth his while even to traduce and vilify him, he has scarcely friend or foe, the world make a point (as Goldsmith used to say) of taking no more notice of him than if such an individual had never existed; he is to all ordinary intents and purposes dead and buried; but the author of *Political Justice* and of *Caleb Williams* can never die, his name is an abstraction in letters, his works are standard in the history of intellect. He is thought of now like any eminent writer a hundred-and-fifty years ago, or just as he will be a hundred-and-fifty years hence. He knows this, and smiles in silent mockery of himself, reposing on the monument of his fame—

'Sedet, in eternumque sedebit infelix Theseus.'

No work in our time gave such a blow to the philosophical mind of the country as the celebrated *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*. Tom Paine was considered for the time as a Tom Fool to him; Paley an old woman; Edmund Burke a flashy sophist. Truth, moral truth, it was supposed, had here taken up its abode; and these were the oracles of thought. 'Throw aside your books of chemistry,' said Wordsworth to a young man, a student in the Temple, 'and read Godwin on Necessity.' Sad necessity! Fatal reverse! Is truth then so variable? Is it one thing at twenty, and another at forty? Is it at a burning heat in 1793, and below *zero* in 1814? Not so, in the name of manhood and of common sense! Let us pause here a little.—Mr. Godwin indulged in extreme opinions, and carried with him all the most sanguine and fearless understandings of the time. What then? Because those opinions were overcharged, were they therefore altogether groundless? Is the very God of our idolatry all of a sudden to become an abomination and an anathema? Could so many young men of talent, of education, and of principle have been hurried away by what had neither truth, nor nature, not one particle of honest feeling nor the least show of reason in it? Is the *Modern Philosophy* (as it has been called) at one moment a youthful bride, and the next a withered beldame, like the false Duessa in Spenser? Or is the vaunted edifice of Reason, like his House of Pride, gorgeous in front, and dazzling to approach, while 'its hinder parts are ruinous, decayed, and old?' Has the main prop, which supported the mighty fabric, been shaken and given way under the strong grasp of some Samson; or has it not rather been undermined by rats and vermin? At one time, it almost seemed, that 'if this failed,

> The pillar'd firmament was rottenness,
> And earth's base built of stubble:'

now scarce a shadow of it remains, it is crumbled to dust, nor is it even talked of! 'What, then, went ye forth for to see, a reed shaken with the wind?' Was it for this that our young gownsmen of the greatest expectation and promise, versed in classic lore, steeped in dialectics, armed at all points for the foe, well read, well nurtured, well provided for, left the University and the prospect of lawn sleeves, tearing asunder the shackles of the free born spirit, and the cobwebs of school-divinity, to throw themselves at the feet of the new Gamaliel, and learn wisdom from him? Was it for this, that students at the bar, acute, inquisitive, sceptical (here only wild enthusiasts) neglected for a while the paths of preferment and the law as too narrow, tortuous, and unseemly to bear the pure and broad light of reason? Was it for this, that students in medicine missed their way to Lecturerships and the top of their profession, deeming lightly of the health of the body, and dreaming only of the renovation of society and the march of mind? Was it to this that Mr. Southey's *Inscriptions* pointed? to this that Mr. Coleridge's *Religious Musings* tended? Was it for this, that Mr. Godwin himself sat with arms folded, and, 'like Cato, gave his little senate laws?' Or rather, like another Prospero, uttered syllables that with their enchanted breath were to change the world, and might almost stop the stars in their courses? Oh! and is all forgot? Is this sun of intellect blotted from the sky? Or has it suffered total eclipse? Or is it we who make the fancied gloom, by looking at it through the paltry, broken, stained fragments of our own interests and prejudices? Were we fools then, or are we dishonest now? Or was the impulse of the mind less likely to be true and sound when it arose from high thought and warm feeling, than afterwards, when it was warped and debased by the example, the vices, and follies of the world?

The fault, then, of Mr. Godwin's philosophy, in one word, was too much ambition—'by that sin fell the angels!' He conceived too nobly of his fellows (the most unpardonable crime against them, for there is nothing that annoys our self-love so much as being complimented on imaginary achievements, to which we are wholly unequal) —he raised the standard of morality above the reach of humanity, and by directing virtue to the most airy and romantic heights, made her path dangerous, solitary, and impracticable. The author of the *Political Justice* took abstract reason for the rule of conduct, and abstract good for its end. He places the human mind on an elevation, from which it commands a view of the whole line of moral consequences; and requires it to conform its acts to the larger and more enlightened conscience which it has thus acquired. He absolves man from the gross and narrow ties of sense, custom, authority, private

and local attachment, in order that he may devote himself to the boundless pursuit of universal benevolence. Mr. Godwin gives no quarter to the amiable weaknesses of our nature, nor does he stoop to avail himself of the supplementary aids of an imperfect virtue. Gratitude, promises, friendship, family affection give way, not that they may be merged in the opposite vices or in want of principle; but that the void may be filled up by the disinterested love of good, and the dictates of inflexible justice, which is 'the law of laws, and sovereign of sovereigns.' All minor considerations yield, in his system, to the stern sense of duty, as they do, in the ordinary and established ones, to the voice of necessity. Mr. Godwin's theory, and that of more approved reasoners, differ only in this, that what are with them the exceptions, the extreme cases, he makes the every-day rule. No one denies that on great occasions, in moments of fearful excitement, or when a mighty object is at stake, the lesser and merely instrumental points of duty are to be sacrificed without remorse at the shrine of patriotism, of honour, and of conscience. But the disciple of the *New School* (no wonder it found so many impugners, even in its own bosom!) is to be always the hero of duty; the law to which he has bound himself never swerves nor relaxes; his feeling of what is right is to be at all times wrought up to a pitch of enthusiastic self-devotion; he must become the unshrinking martyr and confessor of the public good. If it be said that this scheme is chimerical and impracticable on ordinary occasions, and to the generality of mankind, well and good; but those who accuse the author of having trampled on the common feelings and prejudices of mankind in wantonness or insult, or without wishing to substitute something better (and only unattainable, because it is better) in their stead, accuse him wrongfully. We may not be able to launch the bark of our affections on the ocean-tide of humanity, we may be forced to paddle along its shores, or shelter in its creeks and rivulets: but we have no right to reproach the bold and adventurous pilot, who dared us to tempt the uncertain abyss, with our own want of courage or of skill, or with the jealousies and impatience, which deter us from undertaking, or might prevent us from accomplishing the voyage!

The *Enquiry concerning Political Justice* (it was urged by its favourers and defenders at the time, and may still be so, without either profaneness or levity) is a metaphysical and logical commentary on some of the most beautiful and striking texts of Scripture. Mr. Godwin is a mixture of the Stoic and of the Christian philosopher. To break the force of the vulgar objections and outcry that have been raised against the Modern Philosophy, as if it were a new and monstrous birth in morals, it may be worth noticing, that volumes of

sermons have been written to excuse the founder of Christianity for not including friendship and private affection among its golden rules, but rather excluding them.[1] Moreover, the answer to the question, 'Who is thy neighbour?' added to the divine precept, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' is the same as in the exploded pages of our author,—'He to whom we can do most good.' In determining this point, we were not to be influenced by any extrinsic or collateral considerations, by our own predilections, or the expectations of others, by our obligations to them or any services they might be able to render us, by the climate they were born in, by the house they lived in, by rank or religion, or party, or personal ties, but by the abstract merits, the pure and unbiassed justice of the case. The artificial helps and checks to moral conduct were set aside as spurious and unnecessary, and we came at once to the grand and simple question—'In what manner we could best contribute to the greatest possible good?' This was the paramount obligation in all cases whatever, from which we had no right to free ourselves upon any idle or formal pretext, and of which each person was to judge for himself, under the infallible authority of his own opinion and the inviolable sanction of his self-approbation. 'There was the rub that made *philosophy* of so short life!' Mr. Godwin's definition of morals was the same as the admired one of law, *reason without passion*; but with the unlimited scope of private opinion, and in a boundless field of speculation (for nothing less would satisfy the pretensions of the New School), there was danger that the unseasoned novice might substitute some pragmatical conceit of his own for the rule of right reason, and mistake a heartless indifference for a superiority to more natural and generous feelings. Our ardent and dauntless reformer followed out the moral of the parable of the Good Samaritan into its most rigid and repulsive consequences with a pen of steel, and let fall his 'trenchant-blade' on every vulnerable point of human infirmity; but there is a want in his system of the mild and persuasive tone of the Gospel, where 'all is conscience and tender heart.' Man was indeed screwed up, by mood and figure, into a logical machine, that was to forward the public good with the utmost punctuality and effect, and it might go very well on smooth ground and under favourable circumstances; but would it work up-hill or *against the grain*? It was to be feared that the proud Temple of Reason, which at a distance and in stately supposition shone like the palaces of the New Jerusalem, might (when placed on actual ground) be broken up into the sordid styes of

[1] Shaftesbury made this an objection to Christianity, which was answered by Foster, Leland, and other eminent divines, on the ground that Christianity had a higher object in view, namely, general philanthropy.

sensuality, and the petty huckster's shops of self-interest! Every man (it was proposed—'so ran the tenour of the bond') was to be a Regulus, a Codrus, a Cato, or a Brutus—every woman a Mother of the Gracchi.

'———— It was well said,
And 'tis a kind of good deed to say well.'

But heroes on paper might degenerate into vagabonds in practice, Corinnas into courtezans. Thus a refined and permanent individual attachment is intended to supply the place and avoid the inconveniences of marriage; but vows of eternal constancy, without church security, are found to be fragile. A member of the *ideal* and perfect commonwealth of letters lends another a hundred pounds for immediate and pressing use; and when he applies for it again, the borrower has still more need of it than he, and retains it for his own especial, which is tantamount to the public good. The Exchequer of pure reason, like that of the State, never refunds. The political as well as the religious fanatic appeals from the overweening opinion and claims of others to the highest and most impartial tribunal, namely, his own breast. Two persons agree to live together in Chambers on principles of pure equality and mutual assistance—but when it comes to the push, one of them finds that the other always insists on his fetching water from the pump in Hare-court, and cleaning his shoes for him. A modest assurance was not the least indispensable virtue in the new perfectibility code; and it was hence discovered to be a scheme, like other schemes where there are all prizes and no blanks, for the accommodation of the enterprizing and cunning, at the expence of the credulous and honest. This broke up the system, and left no good odour behind it! Reason has become a sort of bye-word, and philosophy has, 'fallen first into a fasting, then into a sadness, then into a decline, and last, into the dissolution of which we all complain!' This is a worse error than the former: we may be said to have 'lost the immortal part of ourselves, and what remains is beastly!'

The point of view from which this matter may be fairly considered, is two-fold, and may be stated thus:—In the first place, it by no means follows, because reason is found not to be the only infallible or safe rule of conduct, that it is no rule at all; or that we are to discard it altogether with derision and ignominy. On the contrary, if not the sole, it is the principal ground of action; it is, 'the guide, the stay and anchor of our purest thoughts, and soul of all our moral being.' In proportion as we strengthen and expand this principle, and bring our affections and subordinate, but perhaps more powerful motives of action into harmony with it, it will not admit of a doubt that we

advance to the goal of perfection, and answer the ends of our creation, those ends which not only morality enjoins, but which religion sanctions. If with the utmost stretch of reason, man cannot (as some seemed inclined to suppose) soar up to the God, and quit the ground of human frailty, yet, stripped wholly of it, he sinks at once into the brute. If it cannot stand alone, in its naked simplicity, but requires other props to buttress it up, or ornaments to set it off; yet without it the moral structure would fall flat and dishonoured to the ground. Private reason is that which raises the individual above his mere animal instincts, appetites, and passions: public reason in its gradual progress separates the savage from the civilized state. Without the one, men would resemble wild beasts in their dens; without the other, they would be speedily converted into hordes of barbarians or banditti. Sir Walter Scott, in his zeal to restore the spirit of loyalty, of passive obedience and non-resistance as an acknowledgment for his having been created a Baronet by a Prince of the House of Brunswick, may think it a fine thing to return in imagination to the good old times, 'when in Auvergne alone, there were three hundred nobles whose most ordinary actions were robbery, rape, and murder,' when the castle of each Norman baron was a strong hold from which the lordly proprietor issued to oppress and plunder the neighbouring districts, and when the Saxon peasantry were treated by their gay and gallant tyrants as a herd of loathsome swine—but for our own parts, we beg to be excused; we had rather live in the same age with the author of Waverley and Blackwood's Magazine. Reason is the meter and alnager in civil intercourse, by which each person's upstart and contradictory pretensions are weighed and approved or found wanting, and without which it could not subsist, any more than traffic or the exchange of commodities could be carried on without weights and measures. It is the medium of knowledge, and the polisher of manners, by creating common interests and ideas. Or in the words of a contemporary writer, 'Reason is the queen of the moral world, the soul of the universe, the lamp of human life, the pillar of society, the foundation of law, the beacon of nations, the golden chain let down from heaven, which links all accountable and all intelligent natures in one common system—and in the vain strife between fanatic innovation and fanatic prejudice, we are exhorted to dethrone this queen of the world, to blot out this light of the mind, to deface this fair column, to break in pieces this golden chain! We are to discard and throw from us with loud taunts and bitter execrations that reason, which has been the lofty theme of the philosopher, the poet, the moralist, and the divine, whose name was not first named to be

abused by the enthusiasts of the French Revolution, or to be blasphemed by the madder enthusiasts, the advocates of Divine Right, but which is coeval with, and inseparable from the nature and faculties of man—is the image of his Maker stamped upon him at his birth, the understanding breathed into him with the breath of life, and in the participation and improvement of which alone he is raised above the brute creation and his own physical nature!'—The overstrained and ridiculous pretensions of monks and ascetics were never thought to justify a return to unbridled licence of manners, or the throwing aside of all decency. The hypocrisy, cruelty, and fanaticism, often attendant on peculiar professions of sanctity, have not banished the name of religion from the world. Neither can 'the unreasonableness of the reason' of some modern sciolists so 'unreason our reason,' as to debar us of the benefit of this principle in future, or to disfranchise us of the highest privilege of our nature. In the second place, if it is admitted that Reason alone is not the sole and self-sufficient ground of morals, it is to Mr. Godwin that we are indebted for having settled the point. No one denied or distrusted this principle (before his time) as the absolute judge and interpreter in all questions of difficulty; and if this is no longer the case, it is because he has taken this principle, and followed it into its remotest consequences with more keenness of eye and steadiness of hand than any other expounder of ethics. His grand work is (at least) an *experimentum crucis* to show the weak sides and imperfections of human reason as the sole law of human action. By overshooting the mark, or by 'flying an eagle flight, forth and right on,' he has pointed out the limit or line of separation, between what is practicable and what is barely conceivable—by imposing impossible tasks on the naked strength of the will, he has discovered how far it is or is not in our power to dispense with the illusions of sense, to resist the calls of affection, to emancipate ourselves from the force of habit; and thus, though he has not said it himself, has enabled others to say to the towering aspirations after good, and to the over-bearing pride of human intellect—'Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther!' Captain Parry would be thought to have rendered a service to navigation and his country, no less by proving that there is no North-West Passage, than if he had ascertained that there is one: so Mr. Godwin has rendered an essential service to moral science, by attempting (in vain) to pass the Arctic Circle and Frozen Regions, where the understanding is no longer warmed by the affections, nor fanned by the breeze of fancy! This is the effect of all bold, original, and powerful thinking, that it either discovers the truth, or detects where error lies; and the only crime with which Mr. Godwin can be charged as

a political and moral reasoner is, that he has displayed a more ardent spirit, and a more independent activity of thought than others, in establishing the fallacy (if fallacy it be) of an old popular prejudice that *the Just and True were one*, by 'championing it to the Outrance,' and in the final result placing the Gothic structure of human virtue on an humbler, but a wider and safer foundation than it had hitherto occupied in the volumes and systems of the learned.

Mr. Godwin is an inventor in the regions of romance, as well as a skilful and hardy explorer of those of moral truth. *Caleb Williams* and *St. Leon* are two of the most splendid and impressive works of the imagination that have appeared in our times. It is not merely that these novels are very well for a philosopher to have produced—they are admirable and complete in themselves, and would not lead you to suppose that the author, who is so entirely at home in human character and dramatic situation, had ever dabbled in logic or metaphysics. The first of these, particularly, is a master-piece, both as to invention and execution. The romantic and chivalrous principle of the love of personal fame is embodied in the finest possible manner in the character of Falkland[1]; as in Caleb Williams (who is not the first, but the second character in the piece) we see the very demon of curiosity personified. Perhaps the art with which these two characters are contrived to relieve and set off each other, has never been surpassed in any work of fiction, with the exception of the immortal satire of Cervantes. The restless and inquisitive spirit of Caleb Williams, in search and in possession of his patron's fatal secret, haunts the latter like a second conscience, plants stings in his tortured mind, fans the flames of his jealous ambition, struggling with agonized remorse; and the hapless but noble-minded Falkland at length falls a martyr to the persecution of that morbid and overpowering interest, of which his mingled virtues and vices have rendered him the object. We conceive no one ever began Caleb Williams that did not read it through: no one that ever read it could possibly forget it, or speak of it after any length of time but with an impression as if the events and feelings had been personal to himself. This is the case also with the story of St. Leon, which, with less dramatic interest and intensity of purpose, is set off by a more gorgeous and flowing eloquence, and by a crown of preternatural imagery, that waves over it like a palm-tree! It is the beauty and the charm of Mr. Godwin's descriptions

[1] Mr. Fuseli used to object to this striking delineation a want of historical correctness, inasmuch as the animating principle of the true chivalrous character was the sense of honour, not the mere regard to, or saving of, appearances. This, we think, must be an hypercriticism, from all we remember of books of chivalry and heroes of romance.

that the reader identifies himself with the author; and the secret of this is, that the author has identified himself with his personages. Indeed, he has created them. They are the proper issue of his brain, lawfully begot, not foundlings, nor the 'bastards of his art.' He is not an indifferent, callous spectator of the scenes which he himself pourtrays, but without seeming to feel them. There is no look of patch-work and plagiarism, the beggarly copiousness of borrowed wealth; no tracery-work from worm-eaten manuscripts, from forgotten chronicles, nor piecing out of vague traditions with fragments and snatches of old ballads, so that the result resembles a gaudy, staring transparency, in which you cannot distinguish the daubing of the painter from the light that shines through the flimsy colours and gives them brilliancy. Here all is clearly made out with strokes of the pencil, by fair, not by factitious means. Our author takes a given subject from nature or from books, and then fills it up with the ardent workings of his own mind, with the teeming and audible pulses of his own heart. The effect is entire and satisfactory in proportion. The work (so to speak) and the author are one. We are not puzzled to decide upon their respective pretensions. In reading Mr. Godwin's novels, we know what share of merit the author has in them. In reading the *Scotch Novels*, we are perpetually embarrassed in asking ourselves this question; and perhaps it is not altogether a false modesty that prevents the editor from putting his name in the title-page—he is (for any thing we know to the contrary) only a more voluminous sort of Allen-a-Dale. At least, we may claim this advantage for the English author, that the chains with which he rivets our attention are forged out of his own thoughts, link by link, blow for blow, with glowing enthusiasm: we see the genuine ore melted in the furnace of fervid feeling, and moulded into stately and *ideal* forms; and this is so far better than peeping into an old iron shop, or pilfering from a dealer in marine stores! There is one drawback, however, attending this mode of proceeding, which attaches generally, indeed, to all originality of composition; namely, that it has a tendency to a certain degree of monotony. He who draws upon his own resources, easily comes to an end of his wealth. Mr. Godwin, in all his writings, dwells upon one idea or exclusive view of a subject, aggrandises a sentiment, exaggerates a character, or pushes an argument to extremes, and makes up by the force of style and continuity of feeling for what he wants in variety of incident or ease of manner. This necessary defect is observable in his best works, and is still more so in Fleetwood and Mandeville; the one of which, compared with his more admired performances, is mawkish, and the other morbid. Mr. Godwin is also an essayist, an historian

—in short, what is he not, that belongs to the character of an indefatigable and accomplished author? His *Life of Chaucer* would have given celebrity to any man of letters possessed of three thousand a year, with leisure to write quartos: as the legal acuteness displayed in his *Remarks on Judge Eyre's Charge to the Jury* would have raised any briefless barrister to the height of his profession. This temporary effusion did more—it gave a turn to the trials for high treason in the year 1794, and possibly saved the lives of twelve innocent individuals, marked out as political victims to the Moloch of Legitimacy, which then skulked behind a British throne, and had not yet dared to stalk forth (as it has done since) from its lurking-place, in the face of day, to brave the opinion of the world. If it had then glutted its maw with its intended prey (the sharpness of Mr. Godwin's pen cut the legal cords with which it was attempted to bind them), it might have done so sooner, and with more lasting effect. The world do not know (and we are not sure but the intelligence may startle Mr. Godwin himself), that he is the author of a volume of Sermons, and of a life of Chatham.[1]

Mr Fawcett (an old friend and fellow-student of our author, and who always spoke of his writings with admiration, tinctured with wonder) used to mention a circumstance with respect to the last-mentioned work, which may throw some light on the history and progress of Mr. Godwin's mind. He was anxious to make his biographical account as complete as he could, and applied for this purpose to many of his acquaintance to furnish him with anecdotes or to suggest criticisms. Amongst others Mr. Fawcett repeated to him what he thought a striking passage in a speech on *General Warrants* delivered by Lord Chatham, at which he (Mr Fawcett) had been present. 'Every man's house' (said this emphatic thinker and speaker) 'has been called his castle. And why is it called his castle? Is it because it is defended by a wall, because it is surrounded with a moat? No, it may be nothing more than a straw-built shed. It may be open to all the elements: the wind may enter in, the rain may enter in—but the king *cannot* enter in!' His friend thought that the point was here palpable enough: but when he came to read the printed volume, he found it thus *transposed*: 'Every man's house is his castle. And why is it called so? Is it because it is defended by a wall, because it is surrounded with a moat? No, it may be nothing more than a straw-built shed. It may be exposed to all the elements: the rain may enter into it, *all the winds of Heaven may whistle round it*, but the king cannot, &c.' This was what Fawcett called a defect

[1] We had forgotten the tragedies of Antonio and Ferdinand. Peace be with their *manes*!

of *natural imagination*. He at the same time admitted that Mr. Godwin had improved his native sterility in this respect; or atoned for it by incessant activity of mind and by accumulated stores of thought and powers of language. In fact, his *forte* is not the spontaneous, but the voluntary exercise of talent. He fixes his ambition on a high point of excellence, and spares no pains or time in attaining it. He has less of the appearance of a man of genius, than any one who has given such decided and ample proofs of it. He is ready only on reflection: dangerous only at the rebound. He gathers himself up, and strains every nerve and faculty with deliberate aim to some heroic and dazzling achievement of intellect: but he must make a career before he flings himself, armed, upon the enemy, or he is sure to be unhorsed. Or he resembles an eight-day clock that must be wound up long before it can strike. Therefore, his powers of conversation are but limited. He has neither acuteness of remark, nor a flow of language, both which might be expected from his writings, as these are no less distinguished by a sustained and impassioned tone of declamation than by novelty of opinion or brilliant tracks of invention. In company, Horne Tooke used to make a mere child of him—or of any man! Mr Godwin liked this treatment,[1] and indeed it is his foible to fawn on those who use him *cavalierly*, and to be cavalier to those who express an undue or unqualified admiration of him. He looks up with unfeigned respect to acknowledged reputation (but then it must be very well ascertained before he admits it)—and has a favourite hypothesis that Understanding and Virtue are the same thing. Mr. Godwin possesses a high degree of philosophical candour, and studiously paid the homage of his pen and person to Mr. Malthus, Sir James Mackintosh, and Dr. Parr, for their unsparing attacks on him; but woe to any poor devil who had the hardihood to defend him against them! In private, the author of *Political Justice* at one time reminded those who knew him of the metaphysician engrafted on the Dissenting Minister. There was a dictatorial, captious, quibbling pettiness of manner. He lost this with the first blush and awkwardness of popularity, which surprised him in the retirement of his study; and he has since, with the wear and tear of society, from being too pragmatical, become somewhat too careless. He is, at present, as easy as an old glove. Perhaps there

[1] To be sure, it was redeemed by a high respect and by some magnificent compliments. Once in particular, at his own table, after a good deal of *badinage* and cross-questioning about his being the author of the Reply to Judge Eyre's Charge, on Mr. Godwin's acknowledging that he was, Mr. Tooke said, 'Come here then,' —and when his guest went round to his chair, he took his hand, and pressed it to his lips, saying—'I can do no less for the hand that saved my life!'

is a little attention to effect in this, and he wishes to appear a foil to himself. His best moments are with an intimate acquaintance or two, when he gossips in a fine vein about old authors, Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, or Burnet's *History of his own Time*; and you perceive by your host's talk, as by the taste of seasoned wine, that he has a *cellarage* in his understanding! Mr. Godwin also has a correct *acquired* taste in poetry and the drama. He relishes Donne and Ben Jonson, and recites a passage from either with an agreeable mixture of pedantry and *bonhommie*. He is not one of those who do not grow wiser with opportunity and reflection: he changes his opinions, and changes them for the better. The alteration of his taste in poetry, from an exclusive admiration of the age of Queen Anne to an almost equally exclusive one of that of Elizabeth, is, we suspect, owing to Mr. Coleridge, who some twenty years ago, threw a great stone into the standing pool of criticism, which splashed some persons with the mud, but which gave a motion to the surface and a reverberation to the neighbouring echoes, which has not since subsided. In common company, Mr. Godwin either goes to sleep himself, or sets others to sleep. He is at present engaged in a History of the Commonwealth of England.—*Esto perpetua!* In size Mr. Godwin is below the common stature, nor is his deportment graceful or animated. His face is, however, fine, with an expression of placid temper and recondite thought. He is not unlike the common portraits of Locke. There is a very admirable likeness of him by Mr. Northcote, which with a more heroic and dignified air, only does justice to the profound sagacity and benevolent aspirations of our author's mind. Mr. Godwin has kept the best company of his time, but he has survived most of the celebrated persons with whom he lived in habits of intimacy. He speaks of them with enthusiasm and with discrimination; and sometimes dwells with peculiar delight on a day passed at John Kemble's in company with Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Curran, Mrs. Wolstonecraft and Mrs. Inchbald, when the conversation took a most animated turn, and the subject was of Love. Of all these our author is the only one remaining. Frail tenure, on which human life and genius are lent us for a while to improve or to enjoy!

MR. COLERIDGE

The present is an age of talkers, and not of doers; and the reason is, that the world is growing old. We are so far advanced in the Arts and Sciences, that we live in retrospect, and doat on past achievements. The accumulation of knowledge has been so great,

that we are lost in wonder at the height it has reached, instead of attempting to climb or add to it; while the variety of objects distracts and dazzles the looker-on. What *niche* remains unoccupied? What path untried? What is the use of doing anything, unless we could do better than all those who have gone before us? What hope is there of this? We are like those who have been to see some noble monument of art, who are content to admire without thinking of rivalling it; or like guests after a feast, who praise the hospitality of the donor 'and thank the bounteous Pan'—perhaps carrying away some trifling fragments; or like the spectators of a mighty battle, who still hear its sound afar off, and the clashing of armour and the neighing of the war-horse and the shout of victory is in their ears, like the rushing of innumerable waters!

Mr. Coleridge has 'a mind reflecting ages past'; his voice is like the echo of the congregated roar of the 'dark rearward and abyss' of thought. He who has seen a mouldering tower by the side of a chrystal lake, hid by the mist, but glittering in the wave below, may conceive the dim, gleaming, uncertain intelligence of his eye: he who has marked the evening clouds uprolled (a world of vapours), has seen the picture of his mind, unearthly, unsubstantial, with gorgeous tints and ever-varying forms—

> 'That which was now a horse, even with a thought
> The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct
> As water is in water.'

Our author's mind is (as he himself might express it) *tangential*. There is no subject on which he has not touched, none on which he has rested. With an understanding fertile, subtle, expansive, 'quick, forgetive, apprehensive,' beyond all living precedent, few traces of it will perhaps remain. He lends himself to all impressions alike; he gives up his mind and liberty of thought to none. He is a general lover of art and science, and wedded to no one in particular. He pursues knowledge as a mistress, with outstretched hands and winged speed; but as he is about to embrace her, his Daphne turns—alas! not to a laurel! Hardly a speculation has been left on record from the earliest time, but it is loosely folded up in Mr. Coleridge's memory, like a rich, but somewhat tattered piece of tapestry: we might add (with more seeming than real extravagance), that scarce a thought can pass through the mind of man, but its sound has at some time or other passed over his head with rustling pinions. On whatever question or author you speak, he is prepared to take up the theme with advantage—from Peter Abelard down to Thomas Moore, from

the subtlest metaphysics to the politics of the *Courier*. There is no man of genius, in whose praise he descants, but the critic seems to stand above the author, and 'what in him is weak, to strengthen, what is low, to raise and support': nor is there any work of genius that does not come out of his hands like an illuminated Missal, sparkling even in its defects. If Mr. Coleridge had not been the most impressive talker of his age, he would probably have been the finest writer; but he lays down his pen to make sure of an auditor, and mortgages the admiration of posterity for the stare of an idler. If he had not been a poet, he would have been a powerful logician; if he had not dipped his wing in the Unitarian controversy, he might have soared to the very summit of fancy. But in writing verse, he is trying to subject the Muse to *transcendental* theories: in his abstract reasoning, he misses his way by strewing it with flowers. All that he has done of moment, he had done twenty years ago: since then, he may be said to have lived on the sound of his own voice. Mr. Coleridge is too rich in intellectual wealth, to need to task himself to any drudgery: he has only to draw the sliders of his imagination, and a thousand subjects expand before him, startling him with their brilliancy, or losing themselves in endless obscurity—

> 'And by the force of blear illusion,
> They draw him on to his confusion.'

What is the little he could add to the stock, compared with the countless stores that lie about him, that he should stoop to pick up a name, or to polish an idle fancy? He walks abroad in the majesty of an universal understanding, eyeing the 'rich strond,' or golden sky above him, and 'goes sounding on his way,' in eloquent accents, uncompelled and free!

Persons of the greatest capacity are often those, who for this reason do the least; for surveying themselves from the highest point of view, amidst the infinite variety of the universe, their own share in it seems trifling, and scarce worth a thought, and they prefer the contemplation of all that is, or has been, or can be, to the making a coil about doing what, when done, is no better than vanity. It is hard to concentrate all our attention and efforts on one pursuit, except from ignorance of others; and without this concentration of our faculties, no great progress can be made in any one thing. It is not merely that the mind is not capable of the effort; it does not think the effort worth making. Action is one; but thought is manifold. He whose restless eye glances through the wide compass of nature and art, will not consent to have 'his own nothings monstered': but he must do

this, before he can give his whole soul to them. The mind, after 'letting contemplation have its fill,' or

> 'Sailing with supreme dominion
> Through the azure deep of air,'

sinks down on the ground, breathless, exhausted, powerlesss, inactive; or if it must have some vent to its feelings, seeks the most easy and obvious; is soothed by friendly flattery, lulled by the murmur of immediate applause, thinks as it were aloud, and babbles in its dreams! A scholar (so to speak) is a more disinterested and abstracted character than a mere author. The first looks at the numberless volumes of a library, and says, 'All these are mine': the other points to a single volume (perhaps it may be an immortal one) and says, 'My name is written on the back of it.' This is a puny and groveling ambition, beneath the lofty amplitude of Mr. Coleridge's mind. No, he revolves in his wayward soul, or utters to the passing wind, or discourses to his own shadow, things mightier and more various!—Let us draw the curtain, and unlock the shrine.

Learning rocked him in his cradle, and while yet a child,

> 'He lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.'

At sixteen he wrote his *Ode on Chatterton*, and he still reverts to that period with delight, not so much as it relates to himself (for that string of his own early promise of fame rather jars than otherwise) but as exemplifying the youth of a poet. Mr. Coleridge talks of himself, without being an egotist, for in him the individual is always merged in the abstract and general. He distinguished himself at school and at the University by his knowledge of the classics, and gained several prizes for Greek epigrams. How many men are there (great scholars, celebrated names in literature) who having done the same thing in their youth, have no other idea all the rest of their lives but of this achievement, of a fellowship and dinner, and who, installed in academic honours, would look down on our author as a mere strolling bard! At Christ's Hospital, where he was brought up, he was the idol of those among his schoolfellows, who mingled with their bookish studies the music of thought and of humanity; and he was usually attended round the cloisters by a group of these (inspiring and inspired) whose hearts, even then, burnt within them as he talked, and where the sounds yet linger to mock Elia on his way, still turning pensive to the past! One of the finest and rarest parts of Mr. Coleridge's conversation, is when he expatiates on the Greek tragedians (not that he is not well acquainted,

when he pleases, with the epic poets, or the philosophers, or orators, or historians of antiquity)—on the subtle reasonings and melting pathos of Euripides, on the harmonious gracefulness of Sophocles, tuning his love-laboured song, like sweetest warblings from a sacred grove; on the high-wrought trumpet-tongued eloquence of Æschylus, whose Prometheus, above all, is like an Ode to Fate, and a pleading with Providence, his thoughts being let loose as his body is chained on his solitary rock, and his afflicted will (the emblem of mortality)

'Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny.'

As the impassioned critic speaks and rises in his theme, you would think you heard the voice of the Man hated by the Gods, contending with the wild winds as they roar, and his eye glitters with the spirit of Antiquity!

Next, he was engaged with Hartley's tribes of mind, 'etherial braid, thought-woven,'—and he busied himself for a year or two with vibrations and vibratiuncles and the great law of association that binds all things in its mystic chain, and the doctrine of Necessity (the mild teacher of Charity) and the Millennium, anticipative of a life to come—and he plunged deep into the controversy on Matter and Spirit, and, as an escape from Dr. Priestley's Materialism, where he felt himself imprisoned by the logician's spell, like Ariel in the cloven pine-tree, he became suddenly enamoured of Bishop Berkeley's fairy-world,[1] and used in all companies to build the universe, like a brave poetical fiction, of fine words—and he was deep-read in Malebranche, and in Cudworth's Intellectual System (a huge pile of learning, unwieldy, enormous) and in Lord Brook's hieroglyphic theories, and in Bishop Butler's Sermons, and in the Duchess of Newcastle's fantastic folios, and in Clarke and South and Tillotson, and all the fine thinkers and masculine reasoners of that age—and Leibnitz's *Pre-Established Harmony* reared its arch above his head, like the rainbow in the cloud, convenanting with the hopes of man—and then he fell plump, ten thousand fathoms down (but his wings saved him harmless) into the *hortus siccus* of Dissent, where he pared religion down to the standard of reason, and stripped faith of mystery, and

[1] Mr. Coleridge named his eldest son (the writer of some beautiful Sonnets) after Hartley, and the second after Berkeley. The third was called Derwent, after the river of that name. Nothing can be more characteristic of his mind than this circumstance. All his ideas indeed are like a river, flowing on for ever, and still murmuring as it flows, discharging its waters and still replenished—

'And so by many winding nooks it strays,
With willing sport to the wild ocean!'

preached Christ crucified and the Unity of the Godhead, and so dwelt for a while in the spirit with John Huss and Jerome of Prague and Socinus and old John Zisca, and ran through Neal's History of the Puritans, and Calamy's Non-Conformists' Memorial, having like thoughts and passions with them—but then Spinoza became his God, and he took up the vast chain of being in his hand, and the round world became the centre and the soul of all things in some shadowy sense, forlorn of meaning, and around him he beheld the living traces and the sky-pointing proportions of the mighty Pan —but poetry redeemed him from this spectral philosophy, and he bathed his heart in beauty, and gazed at the golden light of heaven, and drank of the spirit of the universe, and wandered at eve by fairy-stream or fountain,

> '——When he saw nought but beauty,
> When he heard the voice of that Almighty One
> In every breeze that blew, or wave that murmured '—

and wedded with truth in Plato's shade, and in the writings of Proclus and Plotinus saw the ideas of things in the eternal mind, and unfolded all mysteries with the Schoolmen and fathomed the depths of Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas, and entered the third heaven with Jacob Behmen, and walked hand in hand with Swedenborg through the pavilions of the New Jerusalem, and sung his faith in the promise and in the word in his *Religious Musings*—and lowering himself from that dizzy height, poised himself on Milton's wings, and spread out his thoughts in charity with the glad prose of Jeremy Taylor, and wept over Bowles's Sonnets, and studied Cowper's blank verse, and betook himself to Thomson's Castle of Indolence, and sported with the wits of Charles the Second's days and of Queen Anne, and relished Swift's style and that of the John Bull (Arbuthnot's we mean, not Mr. Croker's), and dallied with the British Essayists and Novelists, and knew all qualities of more modern writers with a learned spirit, Johnson, and Goldsmith, and Junius, and Burke, and Godwin, and the Sorrows of Werter, and Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Voltaire, and Marivaux, and Crebillon, and thousands more—now 'laughed with Rabelais in his easy chair' or pointed to Hogarth, or afterwards dwelt on Claude's classic scenes, or spoke with rapture of Raphael, and compared the women at Rome to figures that had walked out of his pictures, or visited the Oratory of Pisa, and described the works of Giotto and Ghirlandaio and Massaccio, and gave the moral of the picture of the Triumph of Death, where the beggars and the wretched invoke his dreadful dart, but the rich and mighty of the earth quail and shrink before it;

and in that land of siren sights and sounds, saw a dance of peasant girls, and was charmed with lutes and gondolas,—or wandered into Germany and lost himself in the labyrinths of the Hartz Forest and of the Kantean philosophy, and amongst the cabalistic names of Fichté and Schelling and Lessing, and God knows who—this was long after, but all the former while, he had nerved his heart and filled his eyes with tears, as he hailed the rising orb of liberty, since quenched in darkness and in blood, and had kindled his affections at the blaze of the French Revolution, and sang for joy when the towers of the Bastile and the proud places of the insolent and the oppressor fell, and would have floated his bark, freighted with fondest fancies, across the Atlantic wave with Southey and others to seek for peace and freedom—

'In Philarmonia's undivided dale!'

Alas! 'Frailty, thy name is *Genius*!'—What is become of all this mighty heap of hope, of thought, of learning, and humanity? It has ended in swallowing doses of oblivion and in writing paragraphs in the *Courier*.—Such and so little is the mind of man!

It was not to be supposed that Mr. Coleridge could keep on at the rate he set off; he could not realize all he knew or thought, and less could not fix his desultory ambition; other stimulants supplied the place, and kept up the intoxicating dream, the fever and the madness of his early impressions. Liberty (the philosopher's and the poet's bride) had fallen a victim, meanwhile, to the murderous practices of the hag, Legitimacy. Proscribed by court-hirelings, too romantic for the herd of vulgar politicians, our enthusiast stood at bay, and at last turned on the pivot of a subtle casuistry to the *unclean side*: but his discursive reason would not let him trammel himself into a poet-laureate or stamp-distributor, and he stopped, ere he had quite passed that well-known 'bourne from whence no traveller returns'—and so has sunk into torpid, uneasy repose, tantalized by useless resources, haunted by vain imaginings, his lips idly moving, but his heart for ever still, or, as the shattered chords vibrate of themselves, making melancholy music to the ear of memory! Such is the fate of genius in an age, when in the unequal contest with sovereign wrong, every man is ground to powder who is not either a born slave, or who does not willingly and at once offer up the yearnings of humanity and the dictates of reason as a welcome sacrifice to besotted prejudice and loathsome power.

Of all Mr. Coleridge's productions, the *Ancient Mariner* is the only one that we could with confidence put into any person's hands, on whom we wished to impress a favourable idea of his extraordinary

powers. Let whatever other objections be made to it, it is unquestionably a work of genius—of wild, irregular, overwhelming imagination, and has that rich, varied movement in the verse, which gives a distant idea of the lofty or changeful tones of Mr. Coleridge's voice. In the *Christabel*, there is one splendid passage on divided friendship. The *Translation of Schiller's Wallenstein* is also a masterly production in its kind, faithful and spirited. Among his smaller pieces there are occasional bursts of pathos and fancy, equal to what we might expect from him; but these form the exception, and not the rule. Such, for instance, is his affecting Sonnet to the author of the Robbers.

'Schiller! that hour I would have wish'd to die,
If through the shudd'ring midnight I had sent
From the dark dungeon of the tower time-rent,
That fearful voice, a famish'd father's cry—
That in no after-moment aught less vast
Might stamp me mortal! A triumphant shout
Black horror scream'd, and all her goblin rout
From the more with'ring scene diminish'd pass'd.
Ah! Bard tremendous in sublimity!
Could I behold thee in thy loftier mood,
Wand'ring at eve, with finely frenzied eye,
Beneath some vast old tempest-swinging wood!
Awhile, with mute awe gazing, I would brood,
Then weep aloud in a wild ecstasy.'

His Tragedy, entitled *Remorse*, is full of beautiful and striking passages, but it does not place the author in the first rank of dramatic writers. But if Mr. Coleridge's works do not place him in that rank, they injure instead of conveying a just idea of the man, for he himself is certainly in the first class of general intellect.

If our author's poetry is inferior to his conversation, his prose is utterly abortive. Hardly a gleam is to be found in it of the brilliancy and richness of those stores of thought and language that he pours out incessantly, when they are lost like drops of water in the ground. The principal work, in which he has attempted to embody his general views of things, is the FRIEND, of which, though it contains some noble passages and fine trains of thought, prolixity and obscurity are the most frequent characteristics.

No two persons can be conceived more opposite in character or genius than the subject of the present and of the preceding sketch. Mr. Godwin, with less natural capacity, and with fewer acquired advantages, by concentrating his mind on some given object, and doing what he had to do with all his might, has accomplished much, and will leave more than one monument of a powerful intellect behind

him; Mr. Coleridge, by dissipating his, and dallying with every subject by turns, has done little or nothing to justify to the world or to posterity, the high opinion which all who have ever heard him converse, or known him intimately, with one accord entertain of him. Mr. Godwin's faculties have kept at home, and plied their task in the workshop of the brain, diligently and effectually: Mr. Coleridge's have gossiped away their time, and gadded about from house to house, as if life's business were to melt the hours in listless talk. Mr. Godwin is intent on a subject, only as it concerns himself and his reputation; he works it out as a matter of duty, and discards from his mind whatever does not forward his main object as impertinent and vain. Mr. Coleridge, on the other hand, delights in nothing but episodes and digressions, neglects whatever he undertakes to perform, and can act only on spontaneous impulses, without object or method. 'He cannot be constrained by mastery.' While he should be occupied with a given pursuit, he is thinking of a thousand other things; a thousand tastes, a thousand objects tempt him, and distract his mind, which keeps open house, and entertains all comers; and after being fatigued and amused with morning calls from idle visitors, finds the day consumed and its business unconcluded. Mr. Godwin, on the contrary, is somewhat exclusive and unsocial in his habits of mind, entertains no company but what he gives his whole time and attention to, and wisely writes over the doors of his understanding, his fancy, and his senses—'No admittance except on business.' He has none of that fastidious refinement and false delicacy, which might lead him to balance between the endless variety of modern attainments. He does not throw away his life (nor a single half-hour of it) in adjusting the claims of different accomplishments, and in choosing between them or making himself master of them all. He sets about his task, (whatever it may be) and goes through it with spirit and fortitude. He has the happiness to think an author the greatest character in the world, and himself the greatest author in it. Mr. Coleridge, in writing an harmonious stanza, would stop to consider whether there was not more grace and beauty in a *Pas de trois*, and would not proceed till he had resolved this question by a chain of metaphysical reasoning without end. Not so Mr. Godwin. That is best to him, which he can do best. He does not waste himself in vain aspirations and effeminate sympathies. He is blind, deaf, insensible to all but the trump of Fame. Plays, operas, painting, music, ball-rooms, wealth, fashion, titles, lords, ladies, touch him not —all these are no more to him than to the magician in his cell, and he writes on to the end of the chapter, through good report and evil report. *Pingo in eternitatem*—is his motto. He neither envies nor

admires what others are, but is contented to be what he is, and strives to do the utmost he can. Mr. Coleridge has flirted with the Muses as with a set of mistresses: Mr. Godwin has been married twice, to Reason and to Fancy, and has to boast no short-lived progeny by each. So to speak, he has *valves* belonging to his mind, to regulate the quantity of gas admitted into it, so that like the bare, unsightly, but well-compacted steam-vessel, it cuts its liquid way, and arrives at its promised end: while Mr. Coleridge's bark, 'taught with the little nautilus to sail,' the sport of every breath, dancing to every wave,

'Youth at its prow, and Pleasure at its helm,'

flutters its gaudy pennons in the air, glitters in the sun, but we wait in vain to hear of its arrival in the destined harbour. Mr. Godwin, with less variety and vividness, with less subtlety and susceptibility both of thought and feeling, has had firmer nerves, a more determined purpose, a more comprehensive grasp of his subject, and the results are as we find them. Each has met with his reward: for justice has, after all, been done to the pretensions of each; and we must, in all cases, use means to ends!

It was a misfortune to any man of talent to be born in the latter end of the last century. Genius stopped the way of Legitimacy, and therefore it was to be abated, crushed, or set aside as a nuisance. The spirit of the monarchy was at variance with the spirit of the age. The flame of liberty, the light of intellect, was to be extinguished with the sword—or with slander, whose edge is sharper than the sword. The war between power and reason was carried on by the first of these abroad—by the last at home. No quarter was given (then or now) by the Government-critics, the authorised censors of the press, to those who followed the dictates of independence, who listened to the voice of the tempter, Fancy. Instead of gathering fruits and flowers, immortal fruits and amaranthine flowers, they soon found themselves beset not only by a host of prejudices, but assailed with all the engines of power, by nicknames, by lies, by all the arts of malice, interest and hypocrisy, without the possibility of their defending themselves 'from the pelting of the pitiless storm,' that poured down upon them from the strong-holds of corruption and authority. The philosophers, the dry abstract reasoners, submitted to this reverse pretty well, and armed themselves with patience 'as with triple steel,' to bear discomfiture, persecution, and disgrace. But the poets, the creatures of sympathy, could not stand the frowns both of king and people. They did not like to be shut out when places and pensions, when the critic's praises, and the laurel-wreath were about to be distributed. They did not stomach being *sent to*

Coventry, and Mr. Coleridge sounded a retreat for them by the help of casuistry, and a musical voice.—'His words were hollow, but they pleased the ear' of his friends of the Lake School, who turned back disgusted and panic-struck from the dry desert of unpopularity, like Hassan the camel-driver,

> 'And curs'd the hour, and curs'd the luckless day,
> When first from Shiraz' walls they bent their way.'

They are safely inclosed there, but Mr. Coleridge did not enter with them; pitching his tent upon the barren waste without, and having no abiding place nor city of refuge!

REV. MR. IRVING

This gentleman has gained an almost unprecedented, and not an altogether unmerited popularity as a preacher. As he is, perhaps, though a burning and a shining light, not 'one of the fixed,' we shall take this opportunity of discussing his merits, while he is at his meridian height; and in doing so, shall 'nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice.'

Few circumstances show the prevailing and preposterous rage for novelty in a more striking point of view, than the success of Mr. Irving's oratory. People go to hear him in crowds, and come away with a mixture of delight and astonishment—they go again to see if the effect will continue, and send others to try to find out the mystery—and in the noisy conflict between extravagant encomiums and splenetic objections, the true secret escapes observation, which is, that the whole thing is, nearly from beginning to end, a *transposition of ideas*. If the subject of these remarks had come out as a player, with all his advantages of figure, voice, and action, we think he would have failed; if, as a preacher, he had kept within the strict bounds of pulpit-oratory, he would scarcely have been much distinguished among his Calvinistic brethren: as a mere author, he would have excited attention rather by his quaintness and affectation of an obsolete style and mode of thinking, than by any thing else. But he has contrived to jumble these several characters together in an unheard-of and unwarranted manner, and the fascination is altogether irresistible. Our Caledonian divine is equally an anomaly in religion, in literature, in personal appearance, and in public speaking. To hear a person spout Shakspeare on the stage is nothing—the charm is nearly worn out—but to hear any one spout Shakspeare (and that

not in a sneaking under-tone, but at the top of his voice, and with the full breadth of his chest) from a Calvinistic pulpit, is new and wonderful. The *Fancy* have lately lost something of their gloss in public estimation, and after the last fight, few would go far to see a Neat or a Spring set-to;—but to see a man who is able to enter the ring with either of them, or brandish a quarter-staff with Friar Tuck, or a broad-sword with Shaw the Life-guard's man, stand up in a strait-laced old-fashioned pulpit, and bandy dialectics with modern philosophers, or give a *cross-buttock* to a cabinet minister, there is something in a sight like this also, that is a cure for sore eyes. It is as if Crib or Molyneux had turned Methodist parson, or as if a Patagonian savage were to come forward as the patron-saint of Evangelical religion. Again, the doctrine of eternal punishment was one of the staple arguments with which, everlastingly drawled out, the old school of Presbyterian divines used to keep their audiences awake, or lull them to sleep; but to which people of taste and fashion paid little attention, as inelegant and barbarous, till Mr. Irving, with his cast-iron features and sledge-hammer blows, puffing like a grim Vulcan, set to work to forge more classic thunderbolts, and kindle the expiring flames anew with the very sweepings of sceptical and infidel libraries, so as to excite a pleasing horror in the female part of his congregation. In short, our popular declaimer has, contrary to the Scripture-caution, put new wine into old bottles, or new cloth on old garments. He has, with an unlimited and daring licence, mixed the sacred and the profane together, the carnal and the spiritual man, the petulance of the bar with the dogmatism of the pulpit, the theatrical and theological, the modern and the obsolete;—what wonder that this splendid piece of patchwork, splendid by contradiction and contrast, has delighted some and confounded others? The more serious part of his congregation indeed complain, though not bitterly, that their pastor has converted their meeting-house into a play-house: but when a lady of quality, introducing herself and her three daughters to the preacher, assures him that they have been to all the most fashionable places of resort, the opera, the theatre, assemblies, Miss Macauley's readings, and Exeter-Change, and have been equally entertained no where else, we apprehend that no remonstrances of a committee of ruling-elders will be able to bring him to his senses again, or make him forego such sweet, but ill-assorted praise. What we mean to insist upon is, that Mr. Irving owes his triumphant success, not to any one quality for which he has been extolled, but to a combination of qualities, the more striking in their immediate effect, in proportion as they are unlooked-for and heterogeneous, like the violent opposition

of light and shade in a picture. We shall endeavour to explain this view of the subject more at large.

Mr. Irving, then, is no common or mean man. He has four or five qualities, possessed in a moderate or in a paramount degree, which, added or multiplied together, fill up the important space he occupies in the public eye. Mr. Irving's intellect itself is of a superior order; he has undoubtedly both talents and acquirements beyond the ordinary run of every-day preachers. These alone, however, we hold, would not account for a twentieth part of the effect he has produced: they would have lifted him perhaps out of the mire and slough of sordid obscurity, but would never have launched him into the ocean-stream of popularity, in which he 'lies floating many a rood';—but to these he adds uncommon height, a graceful figure and action, a clear and powerful voice, a striking, if not a fine face, a bold and fiery spirit, and a most portentous obliquity of vision, which throw him to an immeasurable distance beyond all competition, and effectually relieve whatever there might be of common-place or bombast in his style of composition. Put the case that Mr. Irving had been five feet high—Would he ever have been heard of, or, as he does now, have 'bestrode the world like a Colossus?' No, the thing speaks for itself. He would in vain have lifted his Lilliputian arm to Heaven, people would have laughed at his monkey-tricks. Again, had he been as tall as he is, but had wanted other recommendations, he would have been nothing.

> 'The player's province they but vainly try,
> Who want these powers, deportment, voice, and eye.'

Conceive a rough, ugly, shock-headed Scotchman, standing up in the Caledonian Chapel, and dealing 'damnation round the land' in a broad northern dialect, and with a harsh, screaking voice, what ear polite, what smile serene would have hailed the barbarous prodigy, or not consigned him to utter neglect and derision? But the Rev. Edward Irving, with all his native wildness, 'hath a smooth aspect framed to make women' saints; his very unusual size and height are carried off and moulded into elegance by the most admirable symmetry of form and ease of gesture; his sable locks, his clear iron-grey complexion, and firm-set features, turn the raw, uncouth Scotchman into the likeness of a noble Italian picture; and even his distortion of sight only redeems the otherwise 'faultless monster' within the bounds of humanity, and, when admiration is exhausted and curiosity ceases, excites a new interest by leading to the idle question whether it is an advantage to the preacher or not. Farther, give him all his

actual and remarkable advantages of body and mind, let him be as tall, as strait, as dark and clear of skin, as much at his ease, as silver-tongued, as eloquent and as argumentative as he is, yet with all these, and without a little charlatanery to set them off he had been nothing. He might, keeping within the rigid line of his duty and professed calling, have preached on for ever; he might have divided the old-fashioned doctrines of election, grace, reprobation, predestination, into his sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth heads, and his *lastly* have been looked for as a 'consummation devoutly to be wished'; he might have defied the devil and all his works, and by the help of a loud voice and strong-set person—

'A lusty man to ben an Abbot able;'—

have increased his own congregation, and been quoted among the godly as a powerful preacher of the word; but in addition to this, he went out of his way to attack Jeremy Bentham, and the town was up in arms. The thing was new. He thus wiped the stain of musty ignorance and formal bigotry out of his style. Mr. Irving must have something superior in him, to look over the shining close-packed heads of his congregation to have a hit at the *Great Jurisconsult* in his study. He next, ere the report of the former blow had subsided, made a lunge at Mr. Brougham, and glanced an eye at Mr. Canning; *mystified* Mr. Coleridge, and *stultified* Lord Liverpool in his place—in the Gallery. It was rare sport to see him, 'like an eagle in a dovecote, flutter the Volscians in Corioli.' He has found out the secret of attracting by repelling. Those whom he is likely to attack are curious to hear what he says of them: they go again, to show that they do not mind it. It is no less interesting to the bystanders, who like to witness this sort of *onslaught*—like a charge of cavalry, the shock, and the resistance. Mr. Irving has, in fact, without leave asked or a licence granted, converted the Caledonian Chapel into a Westminster Forum or Debating Society, with the sanctity of religion added to it. Our spirited polemic is not contented to defend the citadel of orthodoxy against all impugners, and shut himself up in texts of Scripture and huge volumes of the Commentators as an impregnable fortress;—he merely makes use of the strong-hold of religion as a resting-place, from which he sallies forth, armed with modern topics and with penal fire, like Achilles of old rushing from the Grecian tents, against the adversaries of God and man. Peter Aretine is said to have laid the Princes of Europe under contribution by penning satires against them: so Mr. Irving keeps the public in awe by insulting all their favourite idols. He does not spare their politicians, their rulers, their moralists, their

poets, their players, their critics, their reviewers, their magazine-writers; he levels their resorts of business, their places of amusement, at a blow—their cities, churches, palaces, ranks and professions, refinements, and elegances—and leaves nothing standing but himself, a mighty landmark in a degenerate age, overlooking the wide havoc he has made! He makes war upon all arts and sciences, upon the faculties and nature of man, on his vices and his virtues, on all existing institutions, and all possible improvements, that nothing may be left but the Kirk of Scotland, and that he may be the head of it. He literally sends a challenge to all London in the name of the KING of HEAVEN, to evacuate its streets, to disperse its population, to lay aside its employments, to burn its wealth, to renounce its vanities and pomp; and for what?—that he may enter in as the *King of Glory;* or after enforcing his threat with the battering-ram of logic, the grape-shot of rhetoric, and the cross-fire of his double vision, reduce the British metropolis to a Scottish heath, with a few miserable hovels upon it, where they may worship God according to *the root of the matter*, and where an old man with a blue bonnet, a fair-haired girl, and a little child would form the flower of his flock! Such is the pretension and the boast of this new Peter the Hermit, who would get rid of all we have done in the way of improvement on a state of barbarous ignorance, or still more barbarous prejudice, in order to begin again on a *tabula rasa* of Calvinism, and have a world of his own making. It is not very surprising that when nearly the whole mass and texture of civil society is indicted as a nuisance, and threatened to be pulled down as a rotten building ready to fall on the heads of the inhabitants, that all classes of people run to hear the crash, and to see the engines and levers at work which are to effect this laudable purpose. What else can be the meaning of our preacher's taking upon himself to denounce the sentiments of the most serious professors in great cities, as vitiated and stark-naught, of relegating religion to his native glens, and pretending that the hymn of praise or the sigh of contrition cannot ascend acceptably to the throne of grace from the crowded street as well as from the barren rock or silent valley? Why put this affront upon his hearers? Why belie his own aspirations?

'God made the country, and man made the town.'

So says the poet; does Mr. Irving say so? If he does, and finds the air of the city death to his piety, why does he not return home again? But if he can breathe it with impunity, and still retain the fervour of his early enthusiasm, and the simplicity and purity of the faith that was once delivered to the saints, why not extend the benefit

of his own experience to others, instead of taunting them with a vapid pastoral theory? Or, if our popular and eloquent divine finds a change in himself, that flattery prevents the growth of grace, that he is becoming the God of his own idolatry by being that of others, that the glittering of coronet-coaches rolling down Holborn-Hill to Hatton Garden, that titled beauty, that the parliamentary complexion of his audience, the compliments of poets, and the stare of peers discompose his wandering thoughts a little; and yet that he cannot give up these strong temptations tugging at his heart; why not extend more charity to others, and show more candour in speaking of himself? There is either a good deal of bigoted intolerance with a deplorable want of self-knowledge in all this; or at least an equal degree of cant and quackery.

To which ever cause we are to attribute this hyperbolical tone, we hold it certain he could not have adopted it, if he had been *a little man*. But his imposing figure and dignified manner enable him to hazard sentiments or assertions that would be fatal to others. His controversial daring is *backed* by his bodily prowess; and by bringing his intellectual pretensions boldly into a line with his physical accomplishments, he, indeed, presents a very formidable front to the sceptic or the scoffer. Take a cubit from his stature, and his whole manner resolves itself into an impertinence. But with that addition, he *overcrows* the town, browbeats their prejudices, and bullies them out of their senses, and is not afraid of being contradicted by any one *less than himself*. It may be said, that individuals with great personal defects have made a considerable figure as public speakers; and Mr. Wilberforce, among others, may be held out as an instance. Nothing can be more insignificant as to mere outward appearance, and yet he is listened to in the House of Commons. But he does not wield it, he does not insult or bully it. He leads by following opinion, he trims, he shifts, he glides on the silvery sounds of his undulating, flexible, cautiously modulated voice, winding his way betwixt heaven and earth, now courting popularity, now calling servility to his aid, and with a large estate, the 'saints,' and the population of Yorkshire to swell his influence, never venturing on the forlorn hope, or doing any thing more than 'hitting the house between wind and water.' Yet he is probably a cleverer man than Mr. Irving.

There is a Mr. Fox, a Dissenting Minister, as fluent a speaker, with a sweeter voice and a more animated and beneficent countenance than Mr. Irving, who expresses himself with manly spirit at a public meeting, takes a hand at whist, and is the darling of his congregation; but he is no more, because he is diminutive in person. His head is

not seen above the crowd the length of a street off. He is the Duke of Sussex in miniature, but the Duke of Sussex does not go to hear him preach, as he attends Mr. Irving, who rises up against him like a martello tower, and is nothing loth to confront the spirit of a man of genius with the blood-royal. We allow there are, or may be, talents sufficient to produce this equality without a single personal advantage; but we deny that this would be the effect of any that our great preacher possesses. We conceive it not improbable that the consciousness of muscular power, that the admiration of his person by strangers might first have inspired Mr. Irving with an ambition to be something, intellectually speaking, and have given him confidence to attempt the greatest things. He has not failed for want of courage. The public, as well as the fair, are won by a show of gallantry. Mr. Irving has shrunk from no opinion, however paradoxical. He has scrupled to avow no sentiment, however obnoxious. He has revived exploded prejudices, he has scouted prevailing fashions. He has opposed the spirit of the age, and not consulted the *esprit de corps*. He has brought back the doctrines of Calvinism in all their inveteracy, and relaxed the inveteracy of his northern accents. He has turned religion and the Caledonian Chapel topsy-turvy. He has held a play-book in one hand, and a Bible in the other, and quoted Shakespeare and Melancthon in the same breath. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is no longer, with his grafting, a dry withered stump; it shoots its branches to the skies, and hangs out its blossoms to the gale—

'Miraturque novos fructus, et non sua poma.'

He has taken the thorns and briars of scholastic divinity, and garlanded them with the flowers of modern literature. He has done all this, relying on the strength of a remarkably fine person and manner, and through that he has succeeded—otherwise he would have perished miserably.

Dr. Chalmers is not by any means so good a looking man, nor so accomplished a speaker as Mr. Irving; yet he at one time almost equalled his oratorical celebrity, and certainly paved the way for him. He has therefore more merit than his admired pupil, as he has done as much with fewer means. He has more scope of intellect and more intensity of purpose. Both his matter and his manner, setting aside his face and figure, are more impressive. Take the volume of 'Sermons on Astronomy,' by Dr. Chalmers, and the 'Four Orations for the Oracles of God' which Mr. Irving lately published, and we apprehend there can be no comparison as to their success. The first ran like wild-fire through the country, were the darlings of

watering-places, were laid in the windows of inns,[1] and were to be met with in all places of public resort; while the 'Orations' get on but slowly, on Milton's stilts, and are pompously announced as in a Third Edition. We believe the fairest and fondest of his admirers would rather see and hear Mr. Irving than read him. The reason is, that the ground work of his compositions is trashy and hackneyed, though set off by extravagant metaphors and an affected phraseology; that without the turn of his head and wave of his hand, his periods have nothing in them; and that he himself is the only *idea* with which he has yet enriched the public mind! He must play off his person, as Orator Henley used to dazzle his hearers with his diamond-ring. The small frontispiece prefixed to the 'Orations' does not serve to convey an adequate idea of the magnitude of the man, nor of the ease and freedom of his motions in the pulpit. How different is Dr. Chalmers! He is like 'a monkey-preacher' to the other. He cannot boast of personal appearance to set him off. But then he is like the very genius or demon of theological controversy personified. He has neither airs nor graces at command; he thinks nothing of himself: he has nothing theatrical about him (which cannot be said of his successor and rival); but you see a man in mortal throes and agony with doubts and difficulties, seizing stubborn knotty points with his teeth, tearing them with his hands, and straining his eyeballs till they almost start out of their sockets, in pursuit of a train of visionary reasoning, like a Highland-seer with his second sight. The description of Balfour of Burley in his cave, with his Bible in one hand and his sword in the other, contending with the imaginary enemy of mankind, gasping for breath, and with the cold moisture running down his face, gives a lively idea of Dr. Chalmers's prophetic fury in the pulpit. If we could have looked in to have seen Burley hard-beset 'by the coinage of his heat-oppressed brain,' who would have asked whether he was a handsome man or not? It would be enough to see a man haunted by a spirit, under the strong and entire dominion of a wilful hallucination. So the integrity and vehemence of Dr. Chalmers's manner, the determined way in which he gives himself up to his subject, or lays about him and buffets sceptics and gain-sayers, arrests attention in spite of every other circumstance, and fixes it on that, and that alone, which excites such interest and such eagerness in his own breast! Besides, he is a logician, has a theory in support of whatever he chooses to

[1] We remember finding the volume in the orchard at Burford-bridge near Boxhill, and passing a whole and very delightful morning in reading it, without quitting the shade of an apple-tree. We have not been able to pay Mr. Irving's book the same compliment of reading it at a sitting.

advance, and weaves the tissue of his sophistry so close and intricate, that it is difficult not to be entangled in it, or to escape from it. 'There's magic in the web.' Whatever appeals to the pride of the human understanding, has a subtle charm in it. The mind is naturally pugnacious, cannot refuse a challenge of strength or skill, sturdily enters the lists and resolves to conquer, or to yield itself vanquished in the forms. This is the chief hold Dr. Chalmers had upon his hearers, and upon the readers of his 'Astronomical Discourses.' No one was satisfied with his arguments, no one could answer them, but every one wanted to try what he could make of them, as we try to find out a riddle. 'By his so potent art,' the art of laying down problematical premises, and drawing from them still more doubtful, but not impossible, conclusions, 'he could bedim the noonday sun, betwixt the green sea and the azure vault set roaring war,' and almost compel the stars in their courses to testify to his opinions. The mode in which he undertook to make the circuit of the universe, and demand categorical information 'now of the planetary and now of the fixed,' might put one in mind of Hecate's mode of ascending in a machine from the stage, 'midst troops of spirits,' in which you now admire the skill of the artist, and next tremble for the fate of the performer, fearing that the audacity of the attempt will turn his head or break his neck. The style of these 'Discourses' also, though not elegant or poetical, was, like the subject, intricate and endless. It was that of a man pushing his way through a labyrinth of difficulties, and determined not to flinch. The impression on the reader was proportionate; for, whatever were the merits of the style or matter, both were new and striking; and the train of thought that was unfolded at such length and with such strenuousness, was bold, well-sustained, and consistent with itself.

Mr. Irving wants the continuity of thought and manner which distinguishes his rival—and shines by patches and in bursts. He does not warm or acquire increasing force or rapidity with his progress. He is never hurried away by a deep or lofty enthusiasm, nor touches the highest point of genius or fanaticism, but 'in the very storm and whirlwind of his passion, he acquires and begets a temperance that may give it smoothness.' He has the self-possession and masterly execution of an experienced player or fencer, and does not seem to express his natural convictions, or to be engaged in a mortal struggle. This greater ease and indifference is the result of vast superiority of personal appearance, which 'to be admired needs but to be seen,' and does not require the possessor to work himself up into a passion, or to use any violent contortions to gain attention

or to keep it. These two celebrated preachers are in almost all respects an antithesis to each other. If Mr. Irving is an example of what can be done by the help of external advantages, Dr. Chalmers is a proof of what can be done without them. The one is most indebted to his mind, the other to his body. If Mr. Irving inclines one to suspect fashionable or popular religion of a little *anthropomorphitism*, Dr. Chalmers effectually redeems it from that scandal.

THE LATE MR. HORNE TOOKE

Mr. Horne Tooke was one of those who may be considered as connecting links between a former period and the existing generation. His education and accomplishments, nay, his political opinions, were of the last age; his mind, and the tone of his feelings were *modern*. There was a hard, dry materialism in the very texture of his understanding, varnished over by the external refinements of the old school. Mr. Tooke had great scope of attainment, and great versatility of pursuit; but the same shrewdness, quickness, cool self-possession, the same *literalness* of perception, and absence of passion and enthusiasm, characterised nearly all he did, said, or wrote. He was without a rival (almost) in private conversation, an expert public speaker, a keen politician, a first-rate grammarian, and the finest gentleman (to say the least) of his own party. He had no imagination (or he would not have scorned it!)—no delicacy of taste, no rooted prejudices or strong attachments: his intellect was like a bow of polished steel, from which he shot sharp-pointed poisoned arrows at his friends in private, at his enemies in public. His mind (so to speak) had no *religion* in it, and very little even of the moral qualities of genius; but he was a man of the world, a scholar bred, and a most acute and powerful logician. He was also a wit, and a formidable one: yet it may be questioned whether his wit was any thing more than an excess of his logical faculty: it did not consist in the play of fancy, but in close and cutting combinations of the understanding. 'The law is open to every one: *so*,' said Mr. Tooke, '*is the London Tavern*!' It is the previous deduction formed in the mind, and the splenetic contempt felt for a practical sophism, that *beats about the bush for*, and at last finds the apt illustration; not the casual, glancing coincidence of two objects, that points out an absurdity to the understanding. So, on another occasion, when Sir Allan Gardiner (who was a candidate for Westminster) had objected to Mr. Fox, that 'he was always against the minister,

whether right or wrong,' and Mr. Fox, in his reply, had overlooked this slip of the tongue, Mr. Tooke immediately seized on it, and said, 'he thought it at least an equal objection to Sir Allan, that he was always *with* the minister, whether right or wrong.' This retort had all the effect, and produced the same surprise as the most brilliant display of wit or fancy: yet it was only the detecting a flaw in an argument, like a flaw in an indictment, by a kind of legal pertinacity, or rather by a rigid and constant habit of attending to the exact import of every word and clause in a sentence. Mr. Tooke had the mind of a lawyer; but it was applied to a vast variety of topics and general trains of speculation.

Mr. Horne Tooke was in private company, and among his friends, the finished gentleman of the last age. His manners were as fascinating as his conversation was spirited and delightful. He put one in mind of the burden of the song of '*The King's Old Courtier, and an Old Courtier of the King's*.' He was, however, of the opposite party. It was curious to hear our modern sciolist advancing opinions of the most radical kind without any mixture of radical heat or violence, in a tone of fashionable *nonchalance*, with elegance of gesture and attitude, and with the most perfect good-humour. In the spirit of opposition, or in the pride of logical superiority, he too often shocked the prejudices or wounded the self-love of those about him, while he himself displayed the same unmoved indifference or equanimity. He said the most provoking things with a laughing gaiety, and a polite attention, that there was no withstanding. He threw others off their guard by thwarting their favourite theories, and then availed himself of the temperance of his own pulse to chafe them into madness. He had not one particle of deference for the opinion of others, nor of sympathy with their feelings; nor had he any obstinate convictions of his own to defend—

'Lord of himself, uncumbered with a *creed*!'

He took up any topic by chance, and played with it at will, like a juggler with his cups and balls. He generally ranged himself on the losing side; and had rather an ill-natured delight in contradiction, and in perplexing the understandings of others, without leaving them any clue to guide them out of the labyrinth into which he had led them. He understood, in its perfection, the great art of throwing the *onus probandi* on his adversary; and so could maintain almost any opinion, however absurd or fantastical, with fearless impunity. I have heard a sensible and well-informed man say, that he never was in company with Mr. Tooke without being delighted and surprised, or without feeling the conversation of every other person to be flat in the

comparison; but that he did not recollect having ever heard him make a remark that struck him as a sound and true one, or that he himself appeared to think so. He used to plague Fuseli by asking him after the origin of the Teutonic dialects, and Dr. Parr, by wishing to know the meaning of the common copulative, *Is*. Once at G——'s, he defended Pitt from a charge of verbiage, and endeavoured to prove him superior to Fox. Some one imitated Pitt's manner, to show that it was monotonous, and he imitated him also, to show that it was not. He maintained (what would he not maintain?) that young Betty's acting was finer than John Kemble's, and recited a passage from Douglas in the manner of each, to justify the preference he gave to the former. The mentioning this will please the living; it cannot hurt the dead. He argued on the same occasion and in the same breath, that Addison's style was without modulation, and that it was physically impossible for any one to write well, who was habitually silent in company. He sat like a king at his own table, and gave law to his guests—and to the world! No man knew better how to manage his immediate circle, to foil or bring them out. A professed orator, beginning to address some observations to Mr. Tooke with a voluminous apology for his youth and inexperience, he said, 'Speak up, young man!'—and by taking him at his word, cut short the flower of orations. Porson was the only person of whom he stood in some degree of awe, on account of his prodigious memory and knowledge of his favourite subject, Languages. Sheridan, it has been remarked, said more good things, but had not an equal flow of pleasantry. As an instance of Mr. Horne Tooke's extreme coolness and command of nerve, it has been mentioned that once at a public dinner when he had got on the table to return thanks for his health being drank with a glass of wine in his hand, and when there was a great clamour and opposition for some time, after it had subsided, he pointed to the glass to show that it was still full. Mr. Holcroft (the author of the *Road to Ruin*) was one of the most violent and fiery-spirited of all that motley crew of persons, who attended the Sunday meetings at Wimbledon. One day he was so enraged by some paradox or raillery of his host, that he indignantly rose from his chair, and said, 'Mr. Tooke, you are a scoundrel!' His opponent without manifesting the least emotion, replied, 'Mr. Holcroft, when is it that I am to dine with you? shall it be next Thursday?'—'If you please, Mr. Tooke!' answered the angry philosopher, and sat down again.—It was delightful to see him sometimes turn from these waspish or ludicrous altercations with over-weening antagonists to some old friend and veteran politician seated at his elbow; to hear him recal the time of Wilkes and Liberty, the conversation mellow-

ing like the wine with the smack of age; assenting to all the old man said, bringing out his pleasant *traits*, and pampering him into childish self-importance, and sending him away thirty years younger than he came!

As a public or at least as a parliamentary speaker, Mr. Tooke did not answer the expectations that had been conceived of him, or probably that he had conceived of himself. It is natural for men who have felt a superiority over all those whom they happen to have encountered, to fancy that this superiority will continue, and that it will extend from individuals to public bodies. There is no rule in the case; or rather, the probability lies the contrary way. That which constitutes the excellence of conversation is of little use in addressing large assemblies of people; while other qualities are required that are hardly to be looked for in one and the same capacity. The way to move great masses of men is to show that you yourself are moved. In a private circle, a ready repartee, a shrewd cross-question, ridicule and banter, a caustic remark or an amusing anecdote, whatever sets off the individual to advantage, or gratifies the curiosity or piques the self-love of the hearers, keeps attention alive, and secures the triumph of the speaker—it is a personal contest, and depends on personal and momentary advantages. But in appealing to the public, no one triumphs but in the triumph of some public cause, or by showing a sympathy with the general and predominant feelings of mankind. In a private room, a satirist, a sophist may provoke admiration by expressing his contempt for each of his adversaries in turn, and by setting their opinion at defiance—but when men are congregated together on a great public question and for a weighty object, they must be treated with more respect; they are touched with what affects themselves or the general weal, not with what flatters the vanity of the speaker; they must be moved altogether, if they are moved at all; they are impressed with gratitude for a luminous exposition of their claims or for zeal in their cause; and the lightning of generous indignation at bad men and bad measures is followed by thunders of applause—even in the House of Commons. But a man may sneer and cavil and puzzle and fly-blow every question that comes before him—be despised and feared by others, and admired by no one but himself. He who thinks first of himself, either in the world or in a popular assembly, will be sure to turn attention away from his claims, instead of fixing it there. He must make common cause with his hearers. To lead, he must follow the general bias. Mr. Tooke did not therefore succeed as a speaker in parliament. He stood aloof, he played antics, he exhibited his peculiar talent—while he was on his legs, the question before the

House stood still; the only point at issue respected Mr. Tooke himself, his personal address and adroitness of intellect. Were there to be no more places and pensions, because Mr. Tooke's style was terse and epigrammatic? Were the Opposition benches to be inflamed to an unusual pitch of 'sacred vehemence,' because he gave them plainly to understand there was not a pin to choose between Ministers and Opposition? Would the House let him remain among them, because, if they turned him out on account of his *black coat*, Lord Camelford had threatened to send his *black servant* in his place? This was a good joke, but not a practical one. Would he gain the affections of the people out of doors, by scouting the question of reform? Would the King ever relish the old associate of Wilkes? What interest, then, what party did he represent? He represented nobody but himself. He was an example of an ingenious man, a clever talker, but he was out of his place in the House of Commons; where people did not come (as in his own house) to admire or break a lance with him, but to get through the business of the day, and so adjourn! He wanted effect and *momentum*. Each of his sentences told very well in itself, but they did not altogether make a speech. He left off where he began. His eloquence was a succession of drops, not a stream. His arguments, though subtle and new, did not affect the main body of the question. The coldness and pettiness of his manner did not warm the hearts or expand the understandings of his hearers. Instead of encouraging, he checked the ardour of his friends; and teazed, instead of overpowering his antagonists. The only palpable hit he ever made, while he remained there, was the comparing his own situation in being rejected by the House, on account of the supposed purity of his clerical character, to the story of the girl at the Magdalen, who was told 'she must turn out and qualify.'[1] This met with laughter and loud applause. It was a *home* thrust, and the House (to do them justice) are obliged to any one who, by a smart blow, relieves them of the load of grave responsibility, which sits heavy on their shoulders.—At the hustings, or as an election-candidate, Mr. Tooke did better. There was no great question to move or carry—it was an affair of political *sparring* between himself and the other candidates. He took it in a very cool and leisurely manner—watched his competitors with a wary, sarcastic eye; picked up the mistakes or absurdities that fell from them, and retorted them on their heads; told a story to the mob; and smiled and took snuff with a gentlemanly and becoming air, as if he was already seated in the House. But a Court of Law was the place

[1] 'They receive him like a virgin at the Magdalen, *Go thou and do likewise*'—JUNIUS.

where Mr. Tooke made the best figure in public. He might assuredly be said to be 'native and endued unto that element.' He had here to stand merely on the defensive—not to advance himself, but to block up the way—not to impress others, but to be himself impenetrable. All he wanted was *negative success*; and to this no one was better qualified to aspire. Cross purposes, *moot-points*, pleas, demurrers, flaws in the indictment, double meanings, cases, inconsequentialities, these were the play-things, the darlings of Mr. Tooke's mind; and with these he baffled the Judge, dumb-founded the Counsel, and outwitted the Jury. The report of his trial before Lord Kenyon is a masterpiece of acuteness, dexterity, modest assurance, and legal effect. It is much like his examination before the Commissioners of the Income-Tax—nothing could be got out of him in either case!

Mr. Tooke, as a political leader, belonged to the class of *trimmers*; or at most, it was his delight to make mischief and spoil sport. He would rather be *against* himself than *for* any body else. He was neither a bold nor a safe leader. He enticed others into scrapes, and kept out of them himself. Provided he could say a clever or a spiteful thing, he did not care whether it served or injured the cause. Spleen or the exercise of intellectual power was the motive of his patriotism, rather than principle. He would talk treason with a saving clause; and instil sedition into the public mind, through the medium of a third (who was to be the responsible) party. He made Sir Francis Burdett his spokesman in the House and to the country, often venting his chagrin or singularity of sentiment at the expense of his friend; but what in the first was trick or reckless vanity, was in the last plain downright English honesty and singleness of heart. In the case of the State Trials, in 1794, Mr. Tooke rather compromised his friends to screen himself. He kept repeating that 'others might have gone on to Windsor, but he had stopped at Hounslow,' as if to go farther might have been dangerous and unwarrantable. It was not the question how far he or others had actually gone, but how far they had a right to go, according to the law. His conduct was not the limit of the law, nor did treasonable excess begin where prudence or principle taught him to stop short, though this was the oblique inference liable to be drawn from his line of defence. Mr. Tooke was uneasy and apprehensive for the issue of the Government-prosecution while in confinement, and said, in speaking of it to a friend, with a morbid feeling and an emphasis quite unusual with him—'They want our blood—blood—blood!' It was somewhat ridiculous to implicate Mr. Tooke in a charge of High Treason (and indeed the whole charge was built on the mistaken purport of an intercepted letter

relating to an engagement for a private dinner-party)—his politics were not at all revolutionary. In this respect he was a mere petti-fogger, full of chicane, and captious objections, and unmeaning discontent; but he had none of the grand whirling movements of the French Revolution, nor of the tumultuous glow of rebellion in his head or in his heart. His politics were cast in a different mould, or confined to the party distinctions and court intrigues and pittances of popular right, that made a noise in the time of Junius and Wilkes—and even if his understanding had gone along with more modern and unqualified principles, his cautious temper would have prevented his risking them in practice. Horne Tooke (though not of the same side in politics) had much of the tone of mind and more of the spirit of moral feeling of the celebrated philosopher of Malmesbury. The narrow scale and fine-drawn distinctions of his political creed made his conversation on such subjects infinitely amusing, particularly when contrasted with that of persons who dealt in the sounding *common-places* and sweeping clauses of abstract politics. He knew all the cabals and jealousies and heart-burnings in the beginning of the late reign, the changes of administration and the springs of secret influence, the characters of the leading men, Wilkes, Barrè, Dunning, Chatham, Burke, the Marquis of Rockingham, North, Shelburne, Fox, Pitt, and all the vacillating events of the American war:—these formed a curious back-ground to the more prominent figures that occupied the present time, and Mr. Tooke worked out the minute details and touched in the evanescent *traits* with the pencil of a master. His conversation resembled a political *camera obscura*—as quaint as it was magical. To some pompous pretenders he might seem to narrate *fabellas aniles* (old wives' fables)—but not to those who study human nature, and wish to know the materials of which it is composed. Mr. Tooke's faculties might appear to have ripened and acquired a finer flavour with age. In a former period of his life he was hardly the man he was latterly; or else he had greater abilities to contend against. He no where makes so poor a figure as in his controversy with Junius. He has evidently the best of the argument, yet he makes nothing out of it. He tells a long story about himself, without wit or point in it; and whines and whimpers like a school-boy under the rod of his master. Junius, after bringing a hasty charge against him, has not a single fact to adduce in support of it; but keeps his ground and fairly beats his adversary out of the field by the mere force of style. One would think that 'Parson Horne' knew who Junius was, and was afraid of him. 'Under him his genius is' quite 'rebuked.' With the best cause to defend, he comes off more shabbily from the contest than any other person in

the LETTERS, except Sir William Draper, who is the very hero of defeat.

The great thing which Mr. Horne Tooke has done, and which he has left behind him to posterity, is his work on Grammar, oddly enough entitled THE DIVERSIONS OF PURLEY. Many people have taken it up as a description of a game—others supposing it to be a novel. It is, in truth, one of the few philosophical works on Grammar that were ever written. The essence of it (and, indeed, almost all that is really valuable in it) is contained in his *Letter to Dunning*, published about the year 1775. Mr. Tooke's work is truly elementary. Dr. Lowth described Mr. Harris's *Hermes* as 'the finest specimen of analysis since the days of Aristotle'—a work in which there is no analysis at all, for analysis consists in reducing things to their principles, and not in endless details and subdivisions. Mr. Harris multiplies distinctions, and confounds his readers. Mr. Tooke clears away the rubbish of school-boy technicalities, and strikes at the root of his subject. In accomplishing his arduous task, he was, perhaps, aided not more by the strength and resources of his mind than by its limits and defects. There is a web of old associations wound round language, that is a kind of veil over its natural features; and custom puts on the mask of ignorance. But this veil, this mask the author of *The Diversions of Purley* threw aside and penetrated to the naked truth of things, by the literal, matter-of-fact, unimaginative nature of his understanding, and because he was not subject to prejudices or illusions of any kind. Words may be said to 'bear a charmed life, that must not yield to one of woman born'—with womanish weaknesses and confused apprehensions. But this charm was broken in the case of Mr. Tooke, whose mind was the reverse of effeminate—hard, unbending, concrete, physical, half-savage—and who saw language stripped of the clothing of habit or sentiment, or the disguises of doting pedantry, naked in its cradle, and in its primitive state. Our author tells us that he found his discovery on Grammar among a number of papers on other subjects, which he had thrown aside and forgotten. Is this an idle boast? Or had he made other discoveries of equal importance, which he did not think it worth his while to communicate to the world, but chose to die the churl of knowledge? The whole of his reasoning turns upon showing that the Conjunction *That* is the pronoun *That*, which is itself the participle of a verb, and in like manner that all the other mystical and hitherto unintelligible parts of speech are derived from the only two intelligible ones, the Verb and Noun. 'I affirm *that* gold is yellow,' that is, 'I affirm *that* fact, or that proposition, viz. gold is yellow.' The secret of the Conjunction on which so many

fine heads had split, on which so many learned definitions were thrown away, as if it was its peculiar province and inborn virtue to announce oracles and formal propositions, and nothing else, like a Doctor of Laws, is here at once accounted for, inasmuch as it is clearly nothing but another part of speech, the pronoun, *that*, with a third part of speech, the noun, *thing*, understood. This is getting at a solution of words into their component parts, not glossing over one difficulty by bringing another to parallel it, nor like saying with Mr. Harris, when it is asked, 'what a Conjunction is?' that there are conjunctions copulative, conjunctions disjunctive, and as many other frivolous varieties of the species as any one chooses to hunt out 'with laborious foolery.' Our author hit upon his parent-discovery in the course of a law-suit, while he was examining, with jealous watchfulness, the meaning of words to prevent being entrapped by them; or rather, this circumstance might itself be traced to the habit of satisfying his own mind as to the precise sense in which he himself made use of words. Mr. Tooke, though he had no objection to puzzle others, was mightily averse to being puzzled or *mystified* himself. All was, to his determined mind, either complete light or complete darkness. There was no hazy, doubtful *chiaro-scuro* in his understanding. He wanted something 'palpable to feeling as to sight.' 'What,' he would say to himself, 'do I mean when I use the conjunction *that*? Is it an anomaly, a class by itself, a word sealed against all inquisitive attempts? Is it enough to call it a *copula*, a bridge, a link, a word connecting sentences? That is undoubtedly its use, but what is its origin?' Mr. Tooke thought he had answered this question satisfactorily, and loosened the Gordian knot of grammarians, 'familiar as his garter,' when he said, 'It is the common pronoun, adjective, or participle, *that*, with the noun, *thing or proposition*, implied, and the particular example following it.' So he thought, and so every reader has thought since, with the exception of teachers and writers upon Grammar. Mr. Windham, indeed, who was a sophist, but not a logician, charged him with having found 'a mare's-nest'; but it is not to be doubted that Mr. Tooke's etymologies will stand the test, and last longer than Mr. Windham's ingenious derivation of the practice of bull-baiting from the principles of humanity!

Having thus laid the corner-stone, he proceeded to apply the same method of reasoning to other undecyphered and impracticable terms. Thus the word, *And*, he explained clearly enough to be the verb *add*, or a corruption of the old Saxon, *anandad*. 'Two *and* two make four,' that is, 'two *add* two make four.' Mr. Tooke, in fact, treated words as the chemists do substances; he separated those which are compounded of others from those which are not decompoundable.

He did not explain the obscure by the more obscure, but the difficult by the plain, the complex by the simple. This alone is proceeding upon the true principles of science: the rest is pedantry and *petit-maitreship*. Our philosophical writer distinguished all words into *names of things*, and directions added for joining them together, or originally into *nouns* and *verbs*. It is a pity that he has left this matter short, by omitting to define the Verb. After enumerating sixteen different definitions (all of which he dismisses with scorn and contumely) at the end of two quarto volumes, he refers the reader for the true solution to a third volume, which he did not live to finish. This extraordinary man was in the habit of tantalizing his guests on a Sunday afternoon with sundry abstruse speculations, and putting them off to the following week for a satisfaction of their doubts; but why should he treat posterity in the same scurvy manner, or leave the world without quitting scores with it? I question whether Mr. Tooke was himself in possession of his pretended *nostrum*, and whether, after trying hard at a definition of the verb as a distinct part of speech, as a terrier-dog mumbles a hedge-hog, he did not find it too much for him, and leave it to its fate. It is also a pity that Mr. Tooke spun out his great work with prolix and dogmatical dissertations on irrelevant matters; and after denying the old metaphysical theories of language, should attempt to found a metaphysical theory of his own on the nature and mechanism of language. The nature of words, he contended (it was the basis of his whole system) had no connection with the nature of things or the objects of thought; yet he afterwards strove to limit the nature of things and of the human mind by the technical structure of language. Thus he endeavours to show that there are no abstract ideas, by enumerating two thousand instances of words, expressing abstract ideas, that are the past participles of certain verbs. It is difficult to know what he means by this. On the other hand, he maintains that 'a complex idea is as great an absurdity as a complex star,' and that words only are complex. He also makes out a triumphant list of metaphysical and moral non-entities, proved to be so on the pure principle that the names of these non-entities are participles, not nouns, or names of things. That is strange in so close a reasoner, and in one who maintained that all language was a masquerade of words, and that the class to which they grammatically belonged had nothing to do with the class of ideas they represented.

It is now above twenty years since the two quarto volumes of the *Diversions of Purley* were published, and fifty since the same theory was promulgated in the celebrated *Letter to Dunning*. Yet it is a curious example of the *Spirit of the Age* that Mr. Lindley Murray's

Grammar (a work out of which Mr. C*** helps himself to English, and Mr. M*** to style[1]) has proceeded to the thirtieth edition in complete defiance of all the facts and arguments there laid down. He defines a noun to be the name of a thing. Is quackery a thing, *i.e.* a substance? He defines a verb to be a word signifying *to be, to do, or to suffer*. Are being, action, suffering, verbs? He defines an adjective to be the name of a quality. Are not *wooden, golden, substantial* adjectives? He maintains that there are six cases in English nouns, that is, six various terminations without any change of termination at all,[2] and that English verbs have all the moods, tenses, and persons that the Latin ones have. This is an extraordinary stretch of blindness and obstinacy. He very formally translates the Latin Grammar into English, (as so many had done before him) and fancies he has written an English Grammar; and divines applaud, and schoolmasters usher him into the polite world, and English scholars carry on the jest, while Horne Tooke's genuine anatomy of our native tongue is laid on the shelf. Can it be that our politicians smell a rat in the Member for Old Sarum? That our clergy do not relish Parson Horne? That the world at large are alarmed at acuteness and originality greater than their own? What has all this to do with the formation of the English language or with the first conditions and necessary foundation of speech itself? Is there nothing beyond the reach of prejudice and party-spirit? It seems in this, as in so many other instances, as if there was a patent for absurdity in the natural bias of the human mind, and that folly should be *stereotyped*!

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Sir Walter Scott is undoubtedly the most popular writer of the age—the 'lord of the ascendant' for the time being. He is just half what the human intellect is capable of being: if you take the universe, and divide it into two parts, he knows all that it *has been*; all that it *is to be* is nothing to him. His is a mind brooding over antiquity—scorning 'the present ignorant time.' He is 'laudator temporis acti'—a '*prophesier* of things past.' The old world is to

[1] This work is not without merit in the details and examples of English construction. But its fault even in that part is that he confounds the genius of the English language, making it periphrastic and literal, instead of elliptical and idiomatic. According to Mr. Murray, hardly any of our best writers ever wrote a word of English.

[2] At least, with only one change in the genitive case.

him a crowded map; the new one a dull, hateful blank. He dotes on all well-authenticated superstitions; he shudders at the shadow of innovation. His retentiveness of memory, his accumulated weight of interested prejudice or romantic association have overlaid his other faculties. The cells of his memory are vast, various, full even to bursting with life and motion; his speculative understanding is empty, flaccid, poor, and dead. His mind receives and treasures up every thing brought to it by tradition or custom—it does not project itself beyond this into the world unknown, but mechanically shrinks back as from the edge of a precipice. The land of pure reason is to his apprehension like *Van Dieman's Land*;—barren, miserable, distant, a place of exile, the dreary abode of savages, convicts, and adventurers. Sir Walter would make a bad hand of a description of the *Millennium*, unless he could lay the scene in Scotland five hundred years ago, and then he would want facts and worm-eaten parchments to support his drooping style. Our historical novelist firmly thinks that nothing *is* but what *has been*—that the moral world stands still, as the material one was supposed to do of old—and that we can never get beyond the point where we actually are without utter destruction, though every thing changes and will change from what it was three hundred years ago to what it is now,—from what it is now to all that the bigoted admirer of the good old times most dreads and hates!

It is long since we read, and long since we thought of our author's poetry. It would probably have gone out of date with the immediate occasion, even if he himself had not contrived to banish it from our recollection. It is not to be denied that it had great merit, both of an obvious and intrinsic kind. It abounded in vivid descriptions, in spirited action, in smooth and flowing versification. But it wanted *character*. It was 'poetry of no mark or likelihood.' It slid out of the mind as soon as read, like a river; and would have been forgotten, but that the public curiosity was fed with ever new supplies from the same teeming liquid source. It is not every man that can write six quarto volumes in verse, that are caught up with avidity, even by fastidious judges. But what a difference between *their* popularity and that of the Scotch Novels! It is true, the public read and admired the *Lay of the last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, and so on, and each individual was contented to read and admire because the public did so: but with regard to the prose-works of the same (supposed) author, it is quite *another-guess* sort of thing. Here every one stands forward to applaud on his own ground, would be thought to go before the public opinion, is eager to extol his favourite characters louder, to understand them better than every body else, and has his own scale of comparative excellence for each work, supported by nothing but his own

enthusiastic and fearless convictions. It must be amusing to the *Author of Waverley* to hear his readers and admirers (and are not these the same thing?[1]) quarrelling which of his novels is the best, opposing character to character, quoting passage against passage, striving to surpass each other in the extravagance of their encomiums, and yet unable to settle the precedence, or to do the author's writings justice—so various, so equal, so transcendant are their merits! His volumes of poetry were received as fashionable and well-dressed acquaintances: we are ready to tear the others in pieces as old friends. There was something meretricious in Sir Walter's ballad-rhymes; and like those who keep opera *figurantes*, we were willing to have our admiration shared, and our taste confirmed by the town: but the Novels are like the betrothed of our hearts, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and we are jealous that any one should be as much delighted or as thoroughly acquainted with their beauties as ourselves. For which of his poetical heroines would the reader break a lance so soon as for Jeanie Deans? What *Lady of the Lake* can compare with the beautiful Rebecca? We believe the late Mr. John Scott went to his death-bed (though a painful and premature one) with some degree of satisfaction, inasmuch as he had penned the most elaborate panegyric on the *Scotch Novels* that had as yet appeared!—The *Epics* are not poems, so much as metrical romances. There is a glittering veil of verse thrown over the features of nature and of old romance. The deep incisions into character are 'skinned and filmed over'—the details are lost or shaped into flimsy and insipid decorum; and the truth of feeling and of circumstance is translated into a tinkling sound, a tinsel *common-place*. It must be owned, there is a power in true poetry that lifts the mind from the ground of reality to a higher sphere, that penetrates the inert, scattered, incoherent materials presented to it, and by a force and inspiration of its own, melts and moulds them into sublimity and beauty. But Sir Walter (we contend, under correction) has not this creative impulse, this plastic power, this capacity of reacting on his first impressions. He is a learned, a literal, a *matter-of-fact* expounder of truth or fable:[2] he does not soar above and look down upon his subject, imparting his own lofty views and feelings to his descriptions

[1] No! For we met with a young lady who kept a circulating library and a milliner's shop, in a watering-place in the country, who, when we inquired for the *Scotch Novels*, spoke indifferently about them, said they were 'so dry she could hardly get through them,' and recommended us to read *Agnes*. We never thought of it before; but we would venture to lay a wager that there are many other young ladies in the same situation, and who think 'Old Mortality' 'dry.'

[2] Just as Cobbett is a matter-of-fact reasoner.

of nature—he relies upon it, is raised by it, is one with it, or he is nothing. A poet is essentially a *maker*; that is, he must atone for what he loses in individuality and local resemblance by the energies and resources of his own mind. The writer of whom we speak is deficient in these last. He has either not the faculty or not the will to impregnate his subject by an effort of pure invention. The execution also is much upon a par with the more ephemeral effusions of the press. It is light, agreeable, effeminate, diffuse. Sir Walter's Muse is a *Modern Antique*. The smooth, glossy texture of his verse contrasts happily with the quaint, uncouth, rugged materials of which it is composed; and takes away any appearance of heaviness or harshness from the body of local traditions and obsolete costume. We see grim knights and iron armour; but then they are woven in silk with a careless, delicate hand, and have the softness of flowers. The poet's figures might be compared to old tapestries copied on the finest velvet:—they are not like Raphael's *Cartoons*, but they are very like Mr. Westall's drawings, which accompany, and are intended to illustrate them. This facility and grace of execution is the more remarkable, as a story goes that not long before the appearance of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* Sir Walter (then Mr.) Scott, having, in the company of a friend, to cross the Frith of Forth in a ferry-boat, they proposed to beguile the time by writing a number of verses on a given subject, and that at the end of an hour's hard study, they found they had produced only six lines between them. 'It is plain,' said the unconscious author to his fellow-labourer, 'that you and I need never think of getting our living by writing poetry!' In a year or so after this, he set to work, and poured out quarto upon quarto, as if they had been drops of water. As to the rest, and compared with true and great poets, our Scottish Minstrel is but 'a metre ballad-monger.' We would rather have written one song of Burns, or a single passage in Lord Byron's *Heaven and Earth*, or one of Wordsworth's 'fancies and good-nights,' than all his epics. What is he to Spenser, over whose immortal, ever-amiable verse beauty hovers and trembles, and who has shed the purple light of Fancy, from his ambrosial wings, over all nature? What is there of the might of Milton, whose head is canopied in the blue serene, and who takes us to sit with him there? What is there (in his ambling rhymes) of the deep pathos of Chaucer? Or of the o'er-informing power of Shakespear, whose eye, watching alike the minutest traces of characters and the strongest movements of passion, 'glances from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,' and with the lambent flame of genius, playing round each object, lights up the universe in a robe of its own radiance? Sir Walter has no voluntary power of

combination: all his associations (as we said before) are those of habit or of tradition. He is a mere narrative and descriptive poet, garrulous of the old time. The definition of his poetry is a pleasing superficiality.

Not so of his Novels and Romances. There we turn over a new leaf—another and the same—the same in matter, but in form, in power how different! The author of Waverley has got rid of the tagging of rhymes, the eking out of syllables, the supplying of epithets, the colours of style, the grouping of his characters, and the regular march of events, and comes to the point at once, and strikes at the heart of his subject, without dismay and without disguise. His poetry was a lady's waiting-maid, dressed out in cast-off finery: his prose is a beautiful, rustic nymph, that, like Dorothea in Don Quixote, when she is surprised with dishevelled tresses bathing her naked feet in the brook, looks round her, abashed at the admiration her charms have excited! The grand secret of the author's success in these latter productions is that he has completely got rid of the trammels of authorship; and torn off at one rent (as Lord Peter got rid of so many yards of lace in the *Tale of a Tub*) all the ornaments of fine writing and worn-out sentimentality. All is fresh, as from the hand of nature: by going a century or two back and laying the scene in a remote and uncultivated district, all becomes new and startling in the present advanced period.—Highland manners, characters, scenery, superstitions, Northern dialect and costume, the wars, the religion, and politics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, give a charming and wholesome relief to the fastidious refinement and 'over-laboured lassitude' of modern readers, like the effect of plunging a nervous valetudinarian into a cold-bath. The *Scotch Novels*, for this reason, are not so much admired in Scotland as in England. The contrast, the transition is less striking. From the top of the Calton Hill, the inhabitants of 'Auld Reekie' can descry, or fancy they descry the peaks of Ben Lomond and the waving outline of Rob Roy's country: we who live at the southern extremity of the island can only catch a glimpse of the billowy scene in the descriptions of the Author of Waverley. The mountain air is most bracing to our languid nerves, and it is brought us in ship-loads from the neighbourhood of Abbot's-Ford. There is another circumstance to be taken into the account. In Edinburgh there is a little opposition and something of the spirit of cabal between the partisans of works proceeding from Mr. Constable's and Mr. Blackwood's shops. Mr. Constable gives the highest prices; but being the Whig bookseller, it is grudged that he should do so. An attempt is therefore made to transfer a certain share of popularity to the second-rate Scotch novels,

'the embryo fry, the little airy of *ricketty* children,' issuing through Mr. Blackwood's shop-door. This operates a diversion, which does not affect us here. The Author of Waverley wears the palm of legendary lore alone. Sir Walter may, indeed, surfeit us: his imitators make us sick! It may be asked, it has been asked, 'Have we no materials for romance in England? Must we look to Scotland for a supply of whatever is original and striking in this kind?' And we answer—'Yes!' Every foot of soil is with us worked up: nearly every movement of the social machine is calculable. We have no room left for violent catastrophes; for grotesque quaintnesses; for wizard spells. The last skirts of ignorance and barbarism are seen hovering (in Sir Walter's pages) over the Border. We have, it is true, gipsies in this country as well as at the Cairn of Derncleugh: but they live under clipped hedges, and repose in camp-beds, and do not perch on crags, like eagels, or take shelter, like sea-mews, in basaltic subterranean caverns. We have heaths with rude heaps of stones upon them: but no existing superstition converts them into the Geese of Micklestane-Moor, or sees a Black Dwarf groping among them. We have sects in religion: but the only thing sublime or ridiculous in that way is Mr. Irving, the Caledonian preacher, who 'comes like a satyr staring from the woods, and yet speaks like an orator!' We had a Parson Adams not quite a hundred years ago—a Sir Roger de Coverley rather more than a hundred! Even Sir Walter is ordinarily obliged to pitch his angle (strong as the hook is) a hundred miles to the North of the 'Modern Athens' or a century back. His last work,[1] indeed, is mystical, is romantic in nothing but the title-page. Instead of 'a holy-water sprinkle dipped in dew,' he has given us a fashionable watering-place—and we see what he has made of it. He must not come down from his fastnesses in traditional barbarism and native rusticity; the level, the littleness, the frippery of modern civilization will undo him as it has undone us!

Sir Walter has found out (oh, rare discovery) that facts are better than fiction; that there is no romance like the romance of real life; and that if we can but arrive at what men feel, do, and say in striking and singular situations, the result will be 'more lively, audible, and full of vent,' than the fine-spun cobwebs of the brain. With reverence be it spoken, he is like the man who having to imitate the squeaking of a pig upon the stage, brought the animal under his coat with him. Our author has conjured up the actual people he has to deal with, or as much as he could get of them, in 'their habits as they lived.' He has ransacked old chronicles, and poured the contents upon his page;

[1] St. Ronan's Well.

he has squeezed out musty records; he has consulted wayfaring pilgrims, bed-rid sibyls; he has invoked the spirits of the air; he has conversed with the living and the dead, and let them tell their story their own way; and by borrowing of others, has enriched his own genius with everlasting variety, truth, and freedom. He has taken his materials from the original, authentic sources, in large concrete masses, and not tampered with or too much frittered them away. He is only the amanuensis of truth and history. It is impossible to say how fine his writings in consequence are, unless we could describe how fine nature is. All that portion of the history of his country that he has touched upon (wide as the scope is) the manners, the personages, the events, the scenery, lives over again in his volumes. Nothing is wanting—the illusion is complete. There is a hurtling in the air, a trampling of feet upon the ground, as these perfect representations of human character or fanciful belief come thronging back upon our imaginations. We will merely recall a few of the subjects of his pencil to the reader's recollection; for nothing we could add, by way of note or commendation, could make the impression more vivid.

There is (first and foremost, because the earliest of our acquaintance) the Baron of Bradwardine, stately, kind-hearted, whimsical, pedantic; and Flora MacIvor (whom even *we* forgive for her Jacobitism), the fierce Vich Ian Vohr, and Evan Dhu, constant in death, and Davie Gellatly roasting his eggs or turning his rhymes with restless volubility, and the two stag-hounds that met Waverley, as fine as ever Titian painted, or Paul Veronese:—then there is old Balfour of Burley, brandishing his sword and his Bible with fire-eyed fury, trying a fall with the insolent, gigantic Bothwell at the 'Change-house, and vanquishing him at the noble battle of Loudon-hill; there is Bothwell himself, drawn to the life, proud, cruel, selfish, profligate, but with the love-letters of the gentle Alice (written thirty years before), and his verses to her memory, found in his pocket after his death: in the same volume of *Old Mortality* is that lone figure, like a figure in Scripture, of the woman sitting on the stone at the turning to the mountain, to warn Burley that there is a lion in his path; and the fawning Claverhouse, beautiful as a panther, smooth-looking, blood-spotted; and the fanatics, Macbriar and Mucklewrath, crazed with zeal and sufferings; and the inflexible Morton, and the faithful Edith, who refused to 'give her hand to another while her heart was with her lover in the deep and dead sea.' And in *The Heart of Mid Lothian* we have Effie Deans (that sweet, faded flower) and Jeanie, her more than sister, and old David Deans, the patriarch of St. Leonard's Crags, and Butler, and Dumbiedikes, eloquent in his

silence, and Mr. Bartoline Saddle-tree and his prudent helpmate, and Porteous swinging in the wind, and Madge Wildfire, full of finery and madness, and her ghastly mother. — Again, there is Meg Merrilies, standing on her rock, stretched on her bier with 'her head to the east,' and Dirk Hatterick (equal to Shakespear's Master Barnardine), and Glossin, the soul of an attorney, and Dandy Dinmont, with his terrier-pack and his pony Dumple, and the fiery Colonel Mannering, and the modish old counsellor Pleydell, and Dominie Sampson,[1] and Rob Roy (like the eagle in his eyry), and Baillie Nicol Jarvie, and the inimitable Major Galbraith, and Rashleigh Osbaldistone, and Die Vernon, the best of secret-keepers; and in the *Antiquary*, the ingenious and abstruse Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck, and the old beadsman Edie Ochiltree, and that preternatural figure of old Edith Elspeith, a living shadow, in whom the lamp of life had been long extinguished, had it not been fed by remorse and 'thick-coming' recollections; and that striking picture of the effects of feudal tyranny and fiendish pride, the unhappy Earl of Glenallan; and the Black Dwarf, and his friend Habby of the Heughfoot (the cheerful hunter), and his cousin Grace Armstrong, fresh and laughing like the morning; and the *Children of the Mist*, and the baying of the blood-hound that tracks their steps at a distance (the hollow echoes are in our ears now), and Amy and her hapless love, and the villain Varney, and the deep voice of George of Douglas—and the immoveable Balafre, and Master Oliver the Barber in Quentin Durward—and the quaint humour of the Fortunes of Nigel, and the comic spirit of Peveril of the Peak—and the fine old English romance of Ivanhoe. What a list of names! What a host of associations! What a thing is human life! What a power is that of genius! What a world of thought and feeling is thus rescued from oblivion! How many hours of heartfelt satisfaction has our author given to the gay and thoughtless! How many sad hearts has he soothed in pain and solitude! It is no wonder that the public repay with lengthened applause and gratitude the pleasure they receive. He writes as fast as they can read, and he does not write himself down. He is always in the public eye, and we do not tire of him. His worst is better than any other person's best. His *back-grounds* (and his later works are little else but back-grounds capitally made out) are more attractive than the principal figures and most complicated actions of other writers. His works (taken together) are almost like a new edition of human nature. This is indeed to be an author!

The political bearing of the *Scotch Novels* has been a considerable

[1] Perhaps the finest scene in all these novels, is that where the Dominie meets his pupil, Miss Lucy, the morning after her brother's arrival.

recommendation to them. They are a relief to the mind, rarefied as it has been with modern philosophy, and heated with ultra-radicalism. At a time also, when we bid fair to revive the principles of the Stuarts, it is interesting to bring us acquainted with their persons and misfortunes. The candour of Sir Walter's historic pen levels our bristling prejudices on this score, and sees fair play between Roundheads and Cavaliers, between Protestant and Papist. He is a writer reconciling all the diversities of human nature to the reader. He does not enter into the distinctions of hostile sects or parties, but treats of the strength or the infirmity of the human mind, of the virtues or vices of the human breast, as they are to be found blended in the whole race of mankind. Nothing can show more handsomely or be more gallantly executed. There was a talk at one time that our author was about to take Guy Faux for the subject of one of his novels, in order to put a more liberal and humane construction on the Gunpowder Plot than our 'No Popery' prejudices have hitherto permitted. Sir Walter is a professed *clarifier* of the age from the vulgar and still lurking old-English antipathy to Popery and Slavery. Through some odd process of *servile* logic, it should seem, that in restoring the claims of the Stuarts by the courtesy of romance, the House of Brunswick are more firmly seated in point of fact, and the Bourbons, by collateral reasoning, become legitimate! In any other point of view, we cannot possibly conceive how Sir Walter imagines 'he has done something to revive the declining spirit of loyalty' by these novels. His loyalty is founded on *would-be* treason: he props the actual throne by the shadow of rebellion. Does he really think of making us enamoured of the 'good old times' by the faithful and harrowing portraits he has drawn of them? Would he carry us back to the early stages of barbarism, of clanship, of the feudal system as 'a consummation devoutly to be wished?' Is he infatuated enough, or does he so dote and drivel over his own slothful and self-willed prejudices, as to believe that he will make a single convert to the beauty of Legitimacy, that is, of lawless power and savage bigotry, when he himself is obliged to apologise for the horrors he describes, and even render his descriptions credible to the modern reader by referring to the authentic history of these delectable times?[1] He is indeed so besotted as to the moral of his own story,

[1] 'And here we cannot but think it necessary to offer some better proof than the incidents of an idle tale, to vindicate the melancholy representation of manners which has been just laid before the reader. It is grievous to think that those valiant Barons, to whose stand against the crown the liberties of England were indebted for their existence, should themselves have been such dreadful oppressors, and capable of excesses, contrary not only to the laws of England, but

that he has even the blindness to go out of his way to have a fling at *flints* and *dungs* (the contemptible ingredients, as he would have us believe, of a modern rabble) at the very time when he is describing a mob of the twelfth century—a mob (one should think) after the writer's own heart, without one particle of modern philosophy or revolutionary politics in their composition, who were to a man, to a hair, just what priests, and kings, and nobles *let* them be, and who were collected to witness (a spectacle proper to the times) the burning of the lovely Rebecca at a stake for a sorceress, because she was a Jewess, beautiful and innocent, and the consequent victim of insane bigotry and unbridled profligacy. And it is at this moment (when the heart is kindled and bursting with indignation at the revolting abuses of self-constituted power) that Sir Walter *stops the press* to have a sneer at the people, and to put a spoke (as he thinks) in the wheel of upstart innovation! This is what he 'calls backing his friends'—it is thus he administers charms and philtres to our love of Legitimacy, makes us conceive a horror of all reform, civil, political, or religious, and would fain put down the *Spirit of the Age*. The author of Waverley might just as well get up and make a speech at a dinner at Edinburgh, abusing Mr. Mac-Adam for his improvements in the roads, on the ground that they were nearly *impassable* in many places 'sixty years since'; or object to Mr. Peel's *Police-Bill*, by insisting that Hounslow-Heath was formerly a scene of greater interest and terror to highwaymen and travellers, and cut a greater figure in the Newgate Calendar than it does at present.—Oh! Wickliff, Luther, Hampden, Sidney, Somers, mistaken Whigs, and thoughtless Reformers in religion and politics, and all ye, whether poets or philosophers, heroes or sages, inventors of arts or sciences,

to those of nature and humanity. But alas! we have only to extract from the industrious Henry one of those numerous passages which he has collected from contemporary historians, to prove that fiction itself can hardly reach the dark reality of the horrors of the period.

'The description given by the author of the Saxon Chronicle of the cruelties exercised in the reign of King Stephen by the great barons and lords of castles, who were all Normans, affords a strong proof of the excesses of which they were capable when their passions were inflamed. "They grievously oppressed the poor people by building castles; and when they were built, they filled them with wicked men or rather devils, who seized both men and women who they imagined had any money, threw them into prison, and put them to more cruel tortures than the martyrs ever endured. They suffocated some in mud, and suspended others by the feet, or the head, or the thumbs, kindling fires below them. They squeezed the heads of some with knotted cords till they pierced their brains, while they threw others into dungeons swarming with serpents, snakes, and toads." But it would be cruel to put the reader to the pain of perusing the remainder of the description.'—*Henry's Hist.* edit. 1805, vol. vii. p. 346.

patriots, benefactors of the human race, enlighteners and civilisers of the world, who have (so far) reduced opinion to reason, and power to law, who are the cause that we no longer burn witches and heretics at slow fires, that the thumb-screws are no longer applied by ghastly, smiling judges, to extort confession of imputed crimes from sufferers for conscience sake; that men are no longer strung up like acorns on trees without judge or jury, or hunted like wild beasts through thickets and glens, who have abated the cruelty of priests, the pride of nobles, the divinity of kings in former times; to whom we owe it, that we no longer wear round our necks the collar of Gurth the swineherd, and of Wamba the jester; that the castles of great lords are no longer the dens of banditti, from whence they issue with fire and sword, to lay waste the land; that we no longer expire in loathsome dungeons without knowing the cause, or have our right hands struck off for raising them in self-defence against wanton insult; that we can sleep without fear of being burnt in our beds, or travel without making our wills; that no Amy Robsarts are thrown down trap-doors by Richard Varneys with impunity; that no Red Reiver of Westburn-Flat sets fire to peaceful cottages; that no Claverhouse signs cold-blooded death-warrants in sport; that we have no Tristan the Hermit, or Petit-André, crawling near us, like spiders, and making our flesh creep, and our hearts sicken within us at every moment of our lives—ye who have produced this change in the face of nature and society, return to earth once more, and beg pardon of Sir Walter and his patrons, who sigh at not being able to undo all that you have done! Leaving this question, there are two other remarks which we wished to make on the Novels. The one was, to express our admiration of the good-nature of the mottos, in which the author has taken occasion to remember and quote almost every living author (whether illustrious or obscure) but himself—an indirect argument in favour of the general opinion as to the source from which they spring—and the other was, to hint our astonishment at the innumerable and incessant instances of bad and slovenly English in them, more, we believe, than in any other works now printed. We should think the writer could not possibly read the manuscript after he has once written it, or overlook the press.

If there were a writer, who 'born for the universe'—

> '—— Narrow'd his mind,
> And to party gave up what was meant for mankind—'

who, from the height of his genius looking abroad into nature, and scanning the recesses of the human heart, 'winked and shut his apprehension up' to every thought or purpose that tended to the

future good of mankind—who, raised by affluence, the reward of successful industry, and by the voice of fame above the want of any but the most honourable patronage, stooped to the unworthy arts of adulation, and abetted the views of the great with the pettifogging feelings of the meanest dependant on office—who, having secured the admiration of the public (with the probable reversion of immortality), showed no respect for himself, for that genius that had raised him to distinction, for that nature which he trampled under foot—who, amiable, frank, friendly, manly in private life, was seized with the dotage of age and the fury of a woman, the instant politics were concerned—who reserved all his candour and comprehensiveness of view for history, and vented his littleness, pique, resentment, bigotry, and intolerance on his contemporaries—who took the wrong side, and defended it by unfair means—who, the moment his own interest or the prejudices of others interfered, seemed to forget all that was due to the pride of intellect, to the sense of manhood—who, praised, admired by men of all parties alike, repaid the public liberality by striking a secret and envenomed blow at the reputation of every one who was not the ready tool of power—who strewed the slime of rankling malice and mercenary scorn over the bud and promise of genius, because it was not fostered in the hot-bed of corruption, or warped by the trammels of servility—who supported the worst abuses of authority in the worst spirit—who joined a gang of desperadoes to spread calumny, contempt, infamy, wherever they were merited by honesty or talent on a different side—who officiously undertook to decide public questions by private insinuations, to prop the throne by nicknames, and the altar by lies—who being (by common consent), the finest, the most humane and accomplished writer of his age, associated himself with and encouraged the lowest panders of a venal press; deluging, nauseating the public mind with the offal and garbage of Billingsgate abuse and vulgar *slang*; showing no remorse, no relenting or compassion towards the victims of this nefarious and organized system of party-proscription, carried on under the mask of literary criticism and fair discussion, insulting the misfortunes of some, and trampling on the early grave of others—

> 'Who would not grieve if such a man there be?
> Who would not weep if Atticus were he?'

But we believe there is no other age or country of the world (but ours), in which such genius could have been so degraded!

LORD BYRON

Lord Byron and Sir Walter Scott are among writers now living[1] the two, who would carry away a majority of suffrages as the greatest geniuses of the age. The former would, perhaps, obtain the preference with the fine gentlemen and ladies (squeamishness apart)—the latter with the critics and the vulgar. We shall treat of them in the same connection, partly on account of their distinguished pre-eminence, and partly because they afford a complete contrast to each other. In their poetry, in their prose, in their politics, and in their tempers, no two men can be more unlike.

If Sir Walter Scott may be thought by some to have been

> 'Born universal heir to all humanity,'

it is plain Lord Byron can set up no such pretension. He is, in a striking degree, the creature of his own will. He holds no communion with his kind; but stands alone, without mate or fellow—

> 'As if a man were author of himself,
> And owned no other kin.'

He is like a solitary peak, all access to which is cut off not more by elevation than distance. He is seated on a lofty eminence, 'cloud-capt,' or reflecting the last rays of setting suns; and in his poetical moods, reminds us of the fabled Titans, retired to a ridgy steep, playing on their Pan's-pipes, and taking up ordinary men and things in their hands with haughty indifference. He raises his subject to himself, or tramples on it; he neither stoops to, nor loses himself in it. He exists not by sympathy, but by antipathy. He scorns all things, even himself. Nature must come to him to sit for her picture—he does not go to her. She must consult his time, his convenience, and his humour; and wear a *sombre* or a fantastic garb, or his Lordship turns his back upon her. There is no ease, no unaffected simplicity of manner, no 'golden mean.' All is strained, or petulant in the extreme. His thoughts are sphered and crystalline; his style 'prouder than when blue Iris bends'; his spirit fiery, impatient, wayward, indefatigable. Instead of taking his impressions from without, in entire and almost unimpaired masses, he moulds them according to his own temperament, and heats the materials of his imagination in the furnace of his passions.—Lord Byron's verse glows like a flame, consuming every thing in its way; Sir Walter Scott's glides

[1] This Essay was written just before Lord Byron's death.

like a river, clear, gentle, harmless. The poetry of the first scorches, that of the last scarcely warms. The light of the one proceeds from an internal source, ensanguined, sullen, fixed; the others reflects the hues of Heaven, or the face of nature, glancing vivid and various. The productions of the Northern Bard have the rust and the freshness of antiquity about them; those of the Noble Poet cease to startle from their extreme ambition of novelty, both in style and matter. Sir Walter's rhymes are 'silly sooth'—

> 'And dally with the innocence of thought,
> Like the old age'—

his Lordship's Muse spurns *the olden time*, and affects all the supercilious airs of a modern fine lady and an upstart. The object of the one writer is to restore us to truth and nature: the other chiefly thinks how he shall display his own power, or vent his spleen, or astonish the reader either by starting new subjects and trains of speculation, or by expressing old ones in a more striking and emphatic manner than they have been expressed before. He cares little what it is he says, so that he can say it differently from others. This may account for the charges of plagiarism which have been repeatedly brought against the Noble Poet—if he can borrow an image or sentiment from another, and heighten it by an epithet or an allusion of greater force and beauty than is to be found in the original passage, he thinks he shows his superiority of execution in this in a more marked manner than if the first suggestion had been his own. It is not the value of the observation itself he is solicitous about; but he wishes to shine by contrast—even nature only serves as a foil to set off his style. He therefore takes the thoughts of others (whether contemporaries or not) out of their mouths, and is content to make them his own, to set his stamp upon them, by imparting to them a more meretricious gloss, a higher relief, a greater loftiness of tone, and a characteristic inveteracy of purpose. Even in those collateral ornaments of modern style, slovenliness, abruptness, and eccentricity (as well as in terseness and significance), Lord Byron, when he pleases, defies competition and surpasses all his contemporaries. Whatever he does, he must do in a more decided and daring manner than any one else—he lounges with extravagance, and yawns so as to alarm the reader! Self-will, passion, the love of singularity, a disdain of himself and of others (with a conscious sense that this is among the ways and means of procuring admiration) are the proper categories of his mind: he is a lordly writer, is above his own reputation, and condescends to the Muses with a scornful grace!

Lord Byron, who in his politics is a *liberal*, in his genius is haughty

and aristocratic: Walter Scott, who is an aristocrat in principle, is popular in his writings, and is (as it were) equally *servile* to nature and to opinion. The genius of Sir Walter is essentially imitative, or 'denotes a foregone conclusion': that of Lord Byron is self-dependent; or at least requires no aid, is governed by no law, but the impulses of its own will. We confess, however much we may admire independence of feeling and erectness of spirit in general or practical questions, yet in works of genius we prefer him who bows to the authority of nature, who appeals to actual objects, to moulder-ing superstitions, to history, observation, and tradition, before him who only consults the pragmatical and restless workings of his own breast, and gives them out as oracles to the world. We like a writer (whether poet or prose-writer) who takes in (or is willing to take in) the range of half the universe in feeling, character, description, much better than we do one who obstinately and invariably shuts himself up in the Bastile of his own ruling passions. In short, we had rather be Sir Walter Scott (meaning thereby the Author of Waverley) than Lord Byron, a hundred times over. And for the reason just given, namely, that he casts his descriptions in the mould of nature, ever-varying, never tiresome, always interesting and always instructive, instead of casting them constantly in the mould of his own individual impressions. He gives us man as he is, or as he was, in almost every variety of situation, action, and feeling. Lord Byron makes man after his own image, woman after his own heart; the one is a capricious tyrant, the other a yielding slave; he gives us the misan-thrope and the voluptuary by turns; and with these two characters, burning or melting in their own fires, he makes out everlasting centos of himself. He hangs the cloud, the film of his existence over all outward things—sits in the centre of his thoughts, and enjoys dark night, bright day, the glitter and the gloom 'in cell monastic'—we see the mournful pall, the crucifix, the death's heads, the faded chaplet of flowers, the gleaming tapers, the agonized brow of genius, the wasted form of beauty—but we are still imprisoned in a dungeon, a curtain intercepts our view, we do not breathe freely the air of nature or of our own thoughts—the other admired author draws aside the curtain, and the veil of egotism is rent, and he shows us the crowd of living men and women, the endless groups, the landscape back-ground, the cloud and the rainbow, and enriches our imagina-tions and relieves one passion by another, and expands and lightens reflection, and takes away that tightness at the breast which arises from thinking or wishing to think that there is nothing in the world out of a man's self!—In this point of view, the Author of Waverley is one of the greatest teachers of morality that ever lived, by

emancipating the mind from petty, narrow, and bigotted prejudices: Lord Byron is the greatest pamperer of those prejudices, by seeming to think there is nothing else worth encouraging but the seeds or the full luxuriant growth of dogmatism and self-conceit. In reading the *Scotch Novels*, we never think about the author, except from a feeling of curiosity respecting our unknown benefactor: in reading Lord Byron's works, he himself is never absent from our minds. The colouring of Lord Byron's style, however rich and dipped in Tyrian dyes, is nevertheless opaque, is in itself an object of delight and wonder: Sir Walter Scott's is perfectly transparent. In studying the one, you seem to gaze at the figures cut in stained glass, which exclude the view beyond, and where the pure light of Heaven is only a means of setting off the gorgeousness of art: in reading the other, you look through a noble window at the clear and varied landscape without. Or to sum up the distinction in one word, Sir Walter Scott is the most *dramatic* writer now living; and Lord Byron is the least so. It would be difficult to imagine that the Author of Waverley is in the smallest degree a pedant; as it would be hard to persuade ourselves that the author of Childe Harold and Don Juan is not a coxcomb, though a provoking and sublime one. In this decided preference given to Sir Walter Scott over Lord Byron, we distinctly include the prose-works of the former; for we do not think his poetry alone by any means entitles him to that precedence. Sir Walter in his poetry, though pleasing and natural, is a comparative trifler: it is in his anonymous productions that he has shown himself for what he is!—

Intensity is the great and prominent distinction of Lord Byron's writings. He seldom gets beyond force of style, nor has he produced any regular work or masterly whole. He does not prepare any plan beforehand, nor revise and retouch what he has written with polished accuracy. His only object seems to be to stimulate himself and his readers for the moment—to keep both alive, to drive away *ennui*, to substitute a feverish and irritable state of excitement for listless indolence or even calm enjoyment. For this purpose he pitches on any subject at random without much thought or delicacy—he is only impatient to begin—and takes care to adorn and enrich it as he proceeds with 'thoughts that breathe and words that burn.' He composes (as he himself has said) whether he is in the bath, in his study, or on horseback—he writes as habitually as others talk or think—and whether we have the inspiration of the Muse or not, we always find the spirit of the man of genius breathing from his verse. He grapples with his subject, and moves, penetrates, and animates it by the electric force of his own feelings. He is often monotonous,

extravagant, offensive; but he is never dull, or tedious, but when he writes prose. Lord Byron does not exhibit a new view of nature, or raise insignificant objects into importance by the romantic associations with which he surrounds them; but generally (at least) takes commonplace thoughts and events, and endeavours to express them in stronger and statelier language than others. His poetry stands like a Martello tower by the side of his subject. He does not, like Mr. Wordsworth, lift poetry from the ground, or create a sentiment out of nothing. He does not describe a daisy or a periwinkle, but the cedar or the cypress: not 'poor men's cottages, but princes' palaces.' His *Childe Harold* contains a lofty and impassioned review of the great events of history, of the mighty objects left as wrecks of time, but he dwells chiefly on what is familiar to the mind of every schoolboy; has brought out few new traits of feeling or thought; and has done no more than justice to the reader's preconceptions by the sustained force and brilliancy of his style and imagery.

Lord Byron's earlier productions, *Lara*, the *Corsair*, &c. were wild and gloomy romances, put into rapid and shining verse. They discover the madness of poetry, together with the inspiration: sullen, moody, capricious, fierce, inexorable, gloating on beauty, thirsting for revenge, hurrying from the extremes of pleasure to pain, but with nothing permanent, nothing healthy or natural. The gaudy decorations and the morbid sentiments remind one of flowers strewed over the face of death! In his *Childe Harold* (as has been just observed) he assumes a lofty and philosophic tone, and 'reasons high of providence, fore-knowledge, will, and fate.' He takes the highest points in the history of the world, and comments on them from a more commanding eminence: he shows us the crumbling monuments of time, he invokes the great names, the mighty spirit of antiquity. The universe is changed into a stately mausoleum:—in solemn measures he chaunts a hymn to fame. Lord Byron has strength and elevation enough to fill up the moulds of our classical and time-hallowed recollections, and to rekindle the earliest aspirations of the mind after greatness and true glory with a pen of fire. The names of Tasso, of Ariosto, of Dante, of Cincinnatus, of Cæsar, of Scipio, lose nothing of their pomp or their lustre in his hands, and when he begins and continues a strain of panegyric on such subjects, we indeed sit down with him to a banquet of rich praise, brooding over imperishable glories,

'Till Contemplation has her fill.'

Lord Byron seems to cast himself indignantly from 'this bank and shoal of time,' or the frail tottering bark that bears up modern reputa-

tion, into the huge sea of ancient renown, and to revel there with untired, outspread plume. Even this in him is spleen—his contempt of his contemporaries makes him turn back to the lustrous past, or project himself forward to the dim future!—Lord Byron's tragedies, Faliero,[1] Sardanapalus, &c. are not equal to his other works. They want the essence of the drama. They abound in speeches and descriptions, such as he himself might make either to himself or others, lolling on his couch of a morning, but do not carry the reader out of the poet's mind to the scenes and events recorded. They have neither action, character, nor interest, but are a sort of *gossamer* tragedies, spun out, and glittering, and spreading a flimsy veil over the face of nature. Yet he spins them on. Of all that he has done in this way the *Heaven and Earth* (the same subject as Mr. Moore's *Loves of the Angels*) is the best. We prefer it even to *Manfred*. *Manfred* is merely himself, with a fancy-drapery on: but in the dramatic fragment published in the *Liberal*, the space between Heaven and Earth, the stage on which his characters have to pass to and fro, seems to fill his Lordship's imagination; and the Deluge, which he has so finely described, may be said to have drowned all his own idle humours.

We must say we think little of our author's turn for satire. His 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers' is dogmatical and insolent, but without refinement or point. He calls people names, and tries to transfix a character with an epithet, which does not stick, because it has no other foundation than his own petulance and spite; or he endeavours to degrade by alluding to some circumstance of external situation. He says of Mr. Wordsworth's poetry, that 'it is his aversion.' That may be: but whose fault is it? This is the satire of a lord, who is accustomed to have all his whims or dislikes taken for gospel, and who cannot be at the pains to do more than signify his contempt or displeasure. If a great man meets with a rebuff which he does not like, he turns on his heel, and this passes for a repartee. The Noble Author says of a celebrated barrister and critic, that he was 'born in a garret sixteen stories high.' The insinuation is not true; or if it were, it is low. The allusion degrades the person who makes, not him to whom it is applied. This is also the satire of a person of birth and quality, who measures all merit by external rank, that is, by his own standard. So his Lordship, in a 'Letter to the Editor of My Grandmother's Review,' addresses him fifty times as '*my dear Robarts*'; nor is there any other wit in the

[1] 'Don Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
My Leipsic, and my Mont St. Jean seems Cain.'
Don Juan, Canto XI.

article. This is surely a mere assumption of superiority from his Lordship's rank, and is the sort of *quizzing* he might use to a person who came to hire himself as a valet to him at *Long's*—the waiters might laugh, the public will not. In like manner, in the controversy about Pope, he claps Mr. Bowles on the back with a coarse facetious familiarity, as if he were his chaplain whom he had invited to dine with him, or was about to present to a benefice. The reverend divine might submit to the obligation, but he has no occasion to subscribe to the jest. If it is a jest that Mr. Bowles should be a parson, and Lord Byron a peer, the world knew this before; there was no need to write a pamphlet to prove it.

The *Don Juan* indeed has great power; but its power is owing to the force of the serious writing, and to the oddity of the contrast between that and the flashy passages with which it is interlarded. From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step. You laugh and are surprised that any one should turn round and *travestie* himself: the drollery is in the utter discontinuity of ideas and feelings. He makes virtue serve as a foil to vice; *dandyism* is (for want of any other) a variety of genius. A classical intoxication is followed by the splashing of soda-water, by frothy effusions of ordinary bile. After the lightning and the hurricane, we are introduced to the interior of the cabin and the contents of wash-hand basins. The solemn hero of tragedy plays *Scrub* in the farce. This is 'very tolerable and not to be endured.' The Noble Lord is almost the only writer who has prostituted his talents in this way. He hallows in order to desecrate; takes a pleasure in defacing the images of beauty his hands have wrought; and raises our hopes and our belief in goodness to Heaven only to dash them to the earth again, and break them in pieces the more effectually from the very height they have fallen. Our enthusiasm for genius or virtue is thus turned into a jest by the very person who has kindled it, and who thus fatally quenches the sparks of both. It is not that Lord Byron is sometimes serious and sometimes trifling, sometimes profligate, and sometimes moral—but when he is most serious and most moral, he is only preparing to mortify the unsuspecting reader by putting a pitiful *hoax* upon him. This is a most unaccountable anomaly. It is as if the eagle were to build its eyry in a common sewer, or the owl were seen soaring to the mid-day sun. Such a sight might make one laugh, but one would not wish or expect it to occur more than once.[1]

In fact, Lord Byron is the spoiled child of fame as well as fortune.

[1] This censure applies to the first Cantos of DON JUAN much more than to the last. It has been called a TRISTRAM SHANDY in rhyme: it is rather a poem written about itself.

He has taken a surfeit of popularity, and is not contented to delight, unless he can shock the public. He would force them to admire in spite of decency and common sense—he would have them read what they would read in no one but himself, or he would not give a rush for their applause. He is to be 'a chartered libertine,' from whom insults are favours, whose contempt is to be a new incentive to admiration. His Lordship is hard to please: he is equally averse to notice or neglect, enraged at censure and scorning praise. He tries the patience of the town to the very utmost, and when they show signs of weariness or disgust, threatens to *discard* them. He says he will write on, whether he is read or not. He would never write another page, if it were not to court popular applause, or to affect a superiority over it. In this respect also, Lord Byron presents a striking contrast to Sir Walter Scott. The latter takes what part of the public favour falls to his share, without grumbling (to be sure he has no reason to complain); the former is always quarrelling with the world about his *modicum* of applause, the *spolia opima* of vanity, and ungraciously throwing the offerings of incense heaped on his shrine back in the faces of his admirers. Again, there is no taint in the writings of the Author of Waverley, all is fair and natural and *above-board*: he never outrages the public mind. He introduces no anomalous character: broaches no staggering opinion. If he goes back to old prejudices and superstitions as a relief to the modern reader, while Lord Byron floats on swelling paradoxes—

'Like proud seas under him';

if the one defers too much to the spirit of antiquity, the other panders to the spirit of the age, goes to the very edge of extreme and licentious speculation, and breaks his neck over it. Grossness and levity are the playthings of his pen. It is a ludicrous circumstance that he should have dedicated his *Cain* to the worthy Baronet! Did the latter ever acknowledge the obligation? We are not nice, not very nice; but we do not particularly approve those subjects that shine chiefly from their rottenness: nor do we wish to see the Muses drest out in the flounces of a false or questionable philosophy, like *Portia* and *Nerissa* in the garb of Doctors of Law. We like metaphysics as well as Lord Byron; but not to see them making flowery speeches, nor dancing a measure in the fetters of verse. We have as good as hinted, that his Lordship's poetry consists mostly of a tissue of superb common-places; even his paradoxes are *common-place*. They are familiar in the schools: they are only new and striking in his dramas and stanzas, by being out of place. In a word, we think that poetry moves best within the circle of nature and received opinion: specula-

tive theory and subtle casuistry are forbidden ground to it. But Lord Byron often wanders into this ground wantonly, wilfully, and unwarrantably. The only apology we can conceive for the spirit of some of Lord Byron's writings, is the spirit of some of those opposed to him. They would provoke a man to write anything. 'Farthest from them is best.' The extravagance and license of the one seems a proper antidote to the bigotry and narrowness of the other. The first *Vision of Judgment* was a set-off to the second, though

'None but itself could be its parallel.'

Perhaps the chief cause of most of Lord Byron's errors is, that he is that anomaly in letters and in society, a Noble Poet. It is a double privilege, almost too much for humanity. He has all the pride of birth and genius. The strength of his imagination leads him to indulge in fantastic opinions; the elevation of his rank sets censure at defiance. He becomes a pampered egotist. He has a seat in the House of Lords, a niche in the Temple of Fame. Every-day mortals, opinions, things are not good enough for him to touch or think of. A mere nobleman is, in his estimation, but 'the tenth transmitter of a foolish face': a mere man of genius is no better than a worm. His Muse is also a lady of quality. The people are not polite enough for him: the Court not sufficiently intellectual. He hates the one and despises the other. By hating and despising others, he does not learn to be satisfied with himself. A fastidious man soon grows querulous and splenetic. If there is nobody but ourselves to come up to our idea of fancied perfection, we easily get tired of our idol. When a man is tired of what he is, by a natural perversity he sets up for what he is not. If he is a poet, he pretends to be a metaphysician: if he is a patrician in rank and feeling, he would fain be one of the people. His ruling motive is not the love of the people, but of distinction; not of truth, but of singularity. He patronizes men of letters out of vanity, and deserts them from caprice, or from the advice of friends. He embarks in an obnoxious publication to provoke censure, and leaves it to shift for itself for fear of scandal. We do not like Sir Walter's gratuitous servility: we like Lord Byron's preposterous *liberalism* little better. He may affect the principles of equality, but he resumes his privilege of peerage, upon occasion. His Lordship has made great offers of service to the Greeks—money and horses. He is at present in Cephalonia, waiting the event!

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We had written thus far when news came of the death of Lord Byron, and put an end at once to a strain of somewhat peevish

invective, which was intended to meet his eye, not to insult his memory. Had we known that we were writing his epitaph, we must have done it with a different feeling. As it is, we think it better and more like himself, to let what we had written stand, than to take up our leaden shafts, and try to melt them into 'tears of sensibility,' or mould them into dull praise, and an affected show of candour. We were not silent during the author's life-time, either for his reproof or encouragement (such as we could give, and *he* did not disdain to accept) nor can we now turn undertakers' men to fix the glittering plate upon his coffin, or fall into the procession of popular woe.—Death cancels every thing but truth; and strips a man of every thing but genius and virtue. It is a sort of natural canonization. It makes the meanest of us sacred—it installs the poet in his immortality, and lifts him to the skies. Death is the great assayer of the sterling ore of talent. At his touch the drossy particles fall off, the irritable, the personal, the gross, and mingle with the dust—the finer and more ethereal part mounts with the winged spirit to watch over our latest memory, and protect our bones from insult. We consign the least worthy qualities to oblivion, and cherish the nobler and imperishable nature with double pride and fondness. Nothing could show the real superiority of genius in a more striking point of view than the idle contests and the public indifference about the place of Lord Byron's interment, whether in Westminster Abbey or his own family-vault. A king must have a coronation—a nobleman a funeral-procession.—The man is nothing without the pageant. The poet's cemetery is the human mind, in which he sows the seeds of never-ending thought—his monument is to be found in his works:

> 'Nothing can cover his high fame but Heaven;
> No pyramids set off his memory,
> But the eternal substance of his greatness.'

Lord Byron is dead: he also died a martyr to his zeal in the cause of freedom, for the last, best hopes of man. Let that be his excuse and his epitaph!

MR. SOUTHEY

Mr. Southey, as we formerly remember to have seen him, had a hectic flush upon his cheek, a roving fire in his eye, a falcon glance, a look at once aspiring and dejected—it was the look that had been impressed upon his face by the events that marked the outset of his life, it was the dawn of Liberty that still tinged his cheek, a smile betwixt hope and sadness that still played upon his quivering lip.

Mr. Southey's mind is essentially sanguine, even to over-weeningness. It is prophetic of good; it cordially embraces it; it casts a longing, lingering look after it, even when it is gone for ever. He cannot bear to give up the thought of happiness, his confidence in his fellow-man, when all else despair. It is the very element, 'where he must live or have no life at all.' While he supposed it possible that a better form of society could be introduced than any that had hitherto existed, while the light of the French Revolution beamed into his soul (and long after, it was seen reflected on his brow, like the light of setting suns on the peak of some high mountain, or lonely range of clouds, floating in purer ether!) while he had this hope, this faith in man left, he cherished it with child-like simplicity, he clung to it with the fondness of a lover, he was an enthusiast, a fanatic, a leveller; he stuck at nothing that he thought would banish all pain and misery from the world—in his impatience of the smallest error or injustice, he would have sacrificed himself and the existing generation (a holocaust) to his devotion to the right cause. But when he once believed after many staggering doubts and painful struggles, that this was no longer possible, when his chimeras and golden dreams of human perfectibility vanished from him, he turned suddenly round, and maintained that 'whatever *is*, is right.' Mr. Southey has not fortitude of mind, has not patience to think that evil is inseparable from the nature of things. His irritable sense rejects the alternative altogether, as a weak stomach rejects the food that is distasteful to it. He hopes on against hope, he believes in all unbelief. He must either repose on actual or on imaginary good. He missed his way in *Utopia*, he has found it at Old Sarum—

'His generous *ardour* no cold medium knows:'

his eagerness admits of no doubt or delay. He is ever in extremes, and ever in the wrong!

The reason is, that not truth, but self-opinion is the ruling principle of Mr. Southey's mind. The charm of novelty, the applause of the multitude, the sanction of power, the venerableness of antiquity, pique, resentment, the spirit of contradiction have a good deal to do with his preferences. His inquiries are partial and hasty: his conclusions raw and unconcocted, and with a considerable infusion of whim and humour and a monkish spleen. His opinions are like certain wines, warm and generous when new; but they will not keep, and soon turn flat or sour, for want of a stronger spirit of the understanding to give a body to them. He wooed Liberty as a youthful lover, but it was perhaps more as a mistress than a bride; and he has since wedded with an elderly and not very reputable lady, called Legitimacy. *A*

wilful man, according to the Scotch proverb, *must have his way*. If it were the cause to which he was sincerely attached, he would adhere to it through good report and evil report; but it is himself to whom he does homage, and would have others do so; and he therefore changes sides, rather than submit to apparent defeat or temporary mortification. Abstract principle has no rule but the understood distinction between right and wrong; the indulgence of vanity, of caprice, or prejudice is regulated by the convenience or bias of the moment. The temperament of our politician's mind is poetical, not philosophical. He is more the creature of impulse, than he is of reflection. He invents the unreal, he embellishes the false with the glosses of fancy, but pays little attention to 'the words of truth and soberness.' His impressions are accidental, immediate, personal, instead of being permanent and universal. Of all mortals he is surely the most impatient of contradiction, even when he has completely turned the tables on himself. Is not this very inconsistency the reason? Is he not tenacious of his opinions, in proportion as they are brittle and hastily formed? Is he not jealous of the grounds of his belief, because he fears they will not bear inspection, or is conscious he has shifted them? Does he not confine others to the strict line of orthodoxy, because he has himself taken every liberty? Is he not afraid to look to the right or the left, lest he should see the ghosts of his former extravagances staring him in the face? Does he not refuse to tolerate the smallest shade of difference in others, because he feels that he wants the utmost latitude of construction for differing so widely from himself? Is he not captious, dogmatical, petulant in delivering his sentiments, according as he has been inconsistent, rash, and fanciful in adopting them? He maintains that there can be no possible ground for differing from him, because he looks only at his own side of the question! He sets up his own favourite notions as the standard of reason and honesty, because he has changed from one extreme to another! He treats his opponents with contempt, because he is himself afraid of meeting with disrespect! He says that 'a Reformer is a worse character than a house-breaker,' in order to stifle the recollection that he himself once was one!

We must say that 'we relish Mr. Southey more in the Reformer' than in his lately acquired, but by no means natural or becoming character of poet-laureat and courtier. He may rest assured that a garland of wild flowers suits him better than the laureat-wreath: that his pastoral odes and popular inscriptions were far more adapted to his genius than his presentation-poems. He is nothing akin to birth-day suits and drawing-room fopperies. 'He is nothing, if not fantastical.' In his figure, in his movements, in his sentiments, he

is sharp and angular, quaint and eccentric. Mr. Southey is not of the court, courtly. Every thing of him and about him is from the people. He is not classical, he is not legitimate. He is not a man cast in the mould of other men's opinions: he is not shaped on any model: he bows to no authority: he yields only to his own wayward peculiarities. He is wild, irregular, singular, extreme. He is no formalist, not he! All is crude and chaotic, self-opinionated, vain. He wants proportion, keeping, system, standard rules. He is not *teres et rotundus*. Mr. Southey walks with his chin erect through the streets of London, and with an umbrella sticking out under his arm, in the finest weather. He has not sacrificed to the Graces, nor studied decorum. With him every thing is projecting, starting from its place, an episode, a digression, a poetic license. He does not move in any given orbit, but like a falling star, shoots from his sphere. He is pragmatical, restless, unfixed, full of experiments, beginning every thing a-new, wiser than his betters, judging for himself, dictating to others. He is decidedly *revolutionary*. He may have given up the reform of the State: but depend upon it, he has some other *hobby* of the same kind. Does he not dedicate to his present Majesty that extraordinary poem on the death of his father, called *The Vision of Judgment*, as a specimen of what might be done in English hexameters? In a court-poem all should be trite and on an approved model. He might as well have presented himself at the levee in a fancy or masquerade dress. Mr. Southey was not *to try conclusions* with Majesty—still less on such an occasion. The extreme freedoms with departed greatness, the party-petulance carried to the Throne of Grace, the unchecked indulgence of private humour, the assumption of infallibility and even of the voice of Heaven in this poem, are pointed instances of what we have said. They show the singular state of over-excitement of Mr. Southey's mind, and the force of old habits of independent and unbridled thinking, which cannot be kept down even in addressing his Sovereign! Look at Mr. Southey's larger poems, his *Kehama*, his *Thalaba*, his *Madoc*, his *Roderic*. Who will deny the spirit, the scope, the splendid imagery, the hurried and startling interest that pervades them? Who will say that they are not sustained on fictions wilder than his own Glendoveer, that they are not the daring creations of a mind curbed by no law, tamed by no fear, that they are not rather like the trances than the waking dreams of genius, that they are not the very paradoxes of poetry? All this is very well, very intelligible, and very harmless, if we regard the rank excrescences of Mr. Southey's poetry, like the red and blue flowers in corn, as the unweeded growth of a luxuriant and wandering fancy; or if we allow the yeasty

workings of an ardent spirit to ferment and boil over—the variety, the boldness, the lively stimulus given to the mind may then atone for the violation of rules and the offences to bed-rid authority ; but not if our poetic libertine sets up for a law-giver and judge, or an apprehender of vagrants in the regions either of taste or opinion. Our motley gentleman deserves the strait-waistcoat, if he is for setting others in the stocks of servility, or condemning them to the pillory for a new mode of rhyme or reason. Or if a composer of sacred Dramas on classic models, or a translator of an old Latin author (that will hardly bear translation) or a vamper-up of vapid cantos and Odes set to music, were to turn pander to prescription and palliater of every dull, incorrigible abuse, it would not be much to be wondered at or even regretted. But in Mr. Southey it was a lamentable falling-off. It is indeed to be deplored, it is a stain on genius, a blow to humanity, that the author of *Joan of Arc*—that work in which the love of Liberty is exhaled like the breath of spring, mild, balmy, heaven-born, that is full of tears and virgin-sighs, and yearnings of affection after truth and good, gushing warm and crimsoned from the heart—should ever after turn to folly, or become the advocate of a rotten cause. After giving up his heart to that subject, he ought not (whatever others might do) ever to have set his foot within the threshold of a court. He might be sure that he would not gain forgiveness or favour by it, nor obtain a single cordial smile from greatness. All that Mr. Southey is or that he does best, is independent, spontaneous, free as the vital air he draws—when he affects the courtier or the sophist, he is obliged to put a constraint upon himself, to hold in his breath, he loses his genius, and offers a violence to his nature. His characteristic faults are the excess of a lively, unguarded temperament:—oh! let them not degenerate into cold-blooded, heartless vices! If we speak or have ever spoken of Mr. Southey with severity, it is with 'the malice of old friends,' for we count ourselves among his sincerest and heartiest well-wishers. But while he himself is anomalous, incalculable, eccentric, from youth to age (the *Wat Tyler* and the *Vision of Judgment* are the Alpha and Omega of his disjointed career) full of sallies of humour, of ebullitions of spleen, making *jets-d'eaux*, cascades, fountains, and water-works of his idle opinions, he would shut up the wits of others in leaden cisterns, to stagnate and corrupt, or bury them under ground—

'Far from the sun and summer gale!'

He would suppress the freedom of wit and humour, of which he has set the example, and claim a privilege for playing antics. He would

introduce an uniformity of intellectual weights and measures, of irregular metres and settled opinions, and enforce it with a high hand. This has been judged hard by some, and has brought down a severity of recrimination, perhaps disproportioned to the injury done. 'Because he is virtuous,' (it has been asked,) 'are there to be no more cakes and ale?' Because he is loyal, are we to take all our notions from the *Quarterly Review*? Because he is orthodox, are we to do nothing but read the *Book of the Church*? We declare we think his former poetical scepticism was not only more amiable, but had more of the spirit of religion in it, implied a more heartfelt trust in nature and providence than his present bigotry. We are at the same time free to declare that we think his articles in the *Quarterly Review*, notwithstanding their virulence and the talent they display, have a tendency to qualify its most pernicious effects. They have redeeming traits in them. 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump'; and the spirit of humanity (thanks to Mr. Southey) is not quite expelled from the *Quarterly Review*. At the corner of his pen, 'there hangs a vapourous drop profound' of independence and liberality, which falls upon its pages, and oozes out through the pores of the public mind. There is a fortunate difference between writers whose hearts are naturally callous to truth, and whose understandings are hermetically sealed against all impressions but those of self-interest, and a man like Mr. Southey. *Once a philanthropist and always a philanthropist.* No man can entirely baulk his nature: it breaks out in spite of him. In all those questions, where the spirit of contradiction does not interfere, on which he is not sore from old bruises, or sick from the extravagance of youthful intoxication, as from a last night's debauch, our 'laureate' is still bold, free, candid, open to conviction, a reformist without knowing it. He does not advocate the slave-trade, he does not arm Mr. Malthus's revolting ratios with his authority, he does not strain hard to deluge Ireland with blood. On such points, where humanity has not become obnoxious, where liberty has not passed into a by-word, Mr. Southey is still liberal and humane. The elasticity of his spirit is unbroken: the bow recoils to its old position. He still stands convicted of his early passion for inquiry and improvement. He was not regularly articled as a Government-tool!—Perhaps the most pleasing and striking of all Mr. Southey's poems are not his triumphant taunts hurled against oppression, are not his glowing effusions to Liberty, but those in which, with a mild melancholy, he seems conscious of his own infirmities of temper, and to feel a wish to correct by thought and time the precocity and sharpness of his disposition. May the quaint but affecting aspiration expressed in

one of these be fulfilled, that as he mellows into maturer age, all such asperities may wear off, and he himself become

'Like the high leaves upon the holly-tree!'

Mr. Southey's prose-style can scarcely be too much praised. It is plain, clear, pointed, familiar, perfectly modern in its texture, but with a grave and sparkling admixture of *archaisms* in its ornaments and occasional phraseology. He is the best and most natural prose-writer of any poet of the day; we mean that he is far better than Lord Byron, Mr. Wordsworth, or Mr. Coleridge, for instance. The manner is perhaps superior to the matter, that is, in his Essays and Reviews. There is rather a want of originality and even of *impetus*: but there is no want of playful or biting satire, of ingenuity, of casuistry, of learning and of information. He is 'full of wise saws and modern' (as well as ancient) 'instances.' Mr. Southey may not always convince his opponents; but he seldom fails to stagger, never to gall them. In a word, we may describe his style by saying that it has not the body or thickness of port wine, but is like clear sherry with kernels of old authors thrown into it!—He also excels as an historian and prose-translator. His histories abound in information, and exhibit proofs of the most indefatigable patience and industry. By no uncommon process of the mind, Mr. Southey seems willing to steady the extreme levity of his opinions and feelings by an appeal to facts. His translations of the Spanish and French romances are also executed *con amore*, and with the literal fidelity and care of a mere linguist. That of the *Cid*, in particular, is a masterpiece. Not a word could be altered for the better, in the old scriptural style which it adopts in conformity to the original. It is no less interesting in itself, or as a record of high and chivalrous feelings and manners, than it is worthy of perusal as a literary curiosity.

Mr. Southey's conversation has a little resemblance to a common-place book; his habitual deportment to a piece of clock-work. He is not remarkable either as a reasoner or an observer: but he is quick, unaffected, replete with anecdote, various and retentive in his reading, and exceedingly happy in his play upon words, as most scholars are who give their minds this sportive turn. We have chiefly seen Mr. Southey in company where few people appear to advantage, we mean in that of Mr. Coleridge. He has not certainly the same range of speculation, nor the same flow of sounding words, but he makes up by the details of knowledge, and by a scrupulous correctness of statement for what he wants in originality of thought, or impetuous declamation. The tones of Mr. Coleridge's voice are eloquence: those of Mr. Southey are meagre, shrill, and dry.

Mr. Coleridge's *forte* is conversation, and he is conscious of this: Mr. Southey evidently considers writing as his stronghold, and if gravelled in an argument, or at a loss for an explanation, refers to something he has written on the subject, or brings out his port-folio, doubled down in dog-ears, in confirmation of some fact. He is scholastic and professional in his ideas. He sets more value on what he writes than on what he says: he is perhaps prouder of his library than of his own productions—themselves a library! He is more simple in his manners than his friend Mr. Coleridge; but at the same time less cordial or conciliating. He is less vain, or has less hope of pleasing, and therefore lays himself less out to please. There is an air of condescension in his civility. With a tall, loose figure, a peaked austerity of countenance, and no inclination to *embonpoint*, you would say he has something puritanical, something ascetic in his appearance. He answers to Mandeville's description of Addison, 'a parson in a tye-wig.' He is not a boon companion, nor does he indulge in the pleasures of the table, nor in any other vice; nor are we aware that Mr. Southey is chargeable with any human frailty but—*want of charity!* Having fewer errors to plead guilty to, he is less lenient to those of others. He was born an age too late. Had he lived a century or two ago, he would have been a happy as well as blameless character. But the distraction of the time has unsettled him, and the multiplicity of his pretensions have jostled with each other. No man in our day (at least no man of genius) has led so uniformly and entirely the life of a scholar from boyhood to the present hour, devoting himself to learning with the enthusiasm of an early love, with the severity and constancy of a religious vow—and well would it have been for him if he had confined himself to this, and not undertaken to pull down or to patch up the State! However irregular in his opinions, Mr. Southey is constant, unremitting, mechanical in his studies, and the performance of his duties. There is nothing Pindaric or Shandean here. In all the relations and charities of private life, he is correct, exemplary, generous, just. We never heard a single impropriety laid to his charge; and if he has many enemies, few men can boast more numerous or stauncher friends.—The variety and piquancy of his writings form a striking contrast to the mode in which they are produced. He rises early, and writes or reads till breakfast-time. He writes or reads after breakfast till dinner, after dinner till tea, and from tea till bed-time—

> 'And follows so the ever-running year
> With profitable labour to his grave—'

on Derwent's banks, beneath the foot of Skiddaw. Study serves him for business, exercise, recreation. He passes from verse to prose, from history to poetry, from reading to writing, by a stop-watch. He writes a fair hand, without blots, sitting upright in his chair, leaves off when he comes to the bottom of the page, and changes the subject for another, as opposite as the Antipodes. His mind is after all rather the recipient and transmitter of knowledge, than the originator of it. He has hardly grasp of thought enough to arrive at any great leading truth. His passions do not amount to more than irritability. With some gall in his pen, and coldness in his manner, he has a great deal of kindness in his heart. Rash in his opinions, he is steady in his attachments—and is a man, in many particulars admirable, in all respectable—his political inconsistency alone excepted!

MR. WORDSWORTH

Mr. Wordsworth's genius is a pure emanation of the Spirit of the Age. Had he lived in any other period of the world, he would never have been heard of. As it is, he has some difficulty to contend with the hebetude of his intellect, and the meanness of his subject. With him 'lowliness is young ambition's ladder': but he finds it a toil to climb in this way the steep of Fame. His homely Muse can hardly raise her wing from the ground, nor spread her hidden glories to the sun. He has 'no figures nor no fantasies, which busy *passion* draws in the brains of men:' neither the gorgeous machinery of mythologic lore, nor the splendid colours of poetic diction. His style is vernacular: he delivers household truths. He sees nothing loftier than human hopes; nothing deeper than the human heart. This he probes, this he tampers with, this he poises, with all its incalculable weight of thought and feeling, in his hands; and at the same time calms the throbbing pulses of his own heart, by keeping his eye ever fixed on the face of nature. If he can make the life-blood flow from the wounded breast, this is the living colouring with which he paints his verse: if he can assuage the pain or close up the wound with the balm of solitary musing, or the healing power of plants and herbs and 'skyey influences,' this is the sole triumph of his art. He takes the simplest elements of nature and of the human mind, the mere abstract conditions inseparable from our being, and tries to compound a new system of poetry from them; and has perhaps succeeded as well as any one could. '*Nihil humani a me alienum puto*'—is the motto of his works. He thinks nothing

low or indifferent of which this can be affirmed: every thing that professes to be more than this, that is not an absolute essence of truth and feeling, he holds to be vitiated, false, and spurious. In a word, his poetry is founded on setting up an opposition (and pushing it to the utmost length) between the natural and the artificial; between the spirit of humanity, and the spirit of fashion and of the world!

It is one of the innovations of the time. It partakes of, and is carried along with, the revolutionary movement of our age: the political changes of the day were the model on which he formed and conducted his poetical experiments. His Muse (it cannot be denied, and without this we cannot explain its character at all) is a levelling one. It proceeds on a principle of equality, and strives to reduce all things to the same standard. It is distinguished by a proud humility. It relies upon its own resources, and disdains external show and relief. It takes the commonest events and objects, as a test to prove that nature is always interesting from its inherent truth and beauty, without any of the ornaments of dress or pomp of circumstances to set it off. Hence the unaccountable mixture of seeming simplicity and real abstruseness in the *Lyrical Ballads*. Fools have laughed at, wise men scarcely understand them. He takes a subject or a story merely as pegs or loops to hang thought and feeling on; the incidents are trifling, in proportion to his contempt for imposing appearances; the reflections are profound, according to the gravity and the aspiring pretensions of his mind.

His popular, inartificial style gets rid (at a blow) of all the trappings of verse, of all the high places of poetry: 'the cloud-capt towers, the solemn temples, the gorgeous palaces,' are swept to the ground, and 'like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a wreck behind.' All the traditions of learning, all the superstitions of age, are obliterated and effaced. We begin *de novo*, on a *tabula rasa* of poetry. The purple pall, the nodding plume of tragedy are exploded as mere pantomime and trick, to return to the simplicity of truth and nature. Kings, queens, priests, nobles, the altar and the throne, the distinctions of rank, birth, wealth, power, 'the judge's robe, the marshal's truncheon, the ceremony that to great ones 'longs,' are not to be found here. The author tramples on the pride of art with greater pride. The Ode and Epode, the Strophe and the Antistrophe, he laughs to scorn. The harp of Homer, the trump of Pindar and of Alcæus are still. The decencies of costume, the decorations of vanity are stripped off without mercy as barbarous, idle, and Gothic. The jewels in the crisped hair, the diadem on the polished brow are thought meretricious, theatrical, vulgar; and nothing contents

his fastidious taste beyond a simple garland of flowers. Neither does he avail himself of the advantages which nature or accident holds out to him. He chooses to have his subject a foil to his invention, to owe nothing but to himself. He gathers manna in the wilderness, he strikes the barren rock for the gushing moisture. He elevates the mean by the strength of his own aspirations; he clothes the naked with beauty and grandeur from the stores of his own recollections. No cypress grove loads his verse with funeral pomp: but his imagination lends 'a sense of joy

> 'To the bare trees and mountains bare,
> And grass in the green field.'

No storm, no shipwreck startles us by its horrors: but the rainbow lifts its head in the cloud, and the breeze sighs through the withered fern. No sad vicissitude of fate, no overwhelming catastrophe in nature deforms his page: but the dew-drop glitters on the bending flower, the tear collects in the glistening eye.

> 'Beneath the hills, along the flowery vales,
> The generations are prepared; the pangs,
> The internal pangs are ready; the dread strife
> Of poor humanity's afflicted will,
> Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny.'

As the lark ascends from its low bed on fluttering wing, and salutes the morning skies; so Mr. Wordsworth's unpretending Muse, in russet guise, scales the summits of reflection, while it makes the round earth its footstool, and its home!

Possibly a good deal of this may be regarded as the effect of disappointed views and an inverted ambition. Prevented by native pride and indolence from climbing the ascent of learning or greatness, taught by political opinions to say to the vain pomp and glory of the world, 'I hate ye,' seeing the path of classical and artificial poetry blocked up by the cumbrous ornaments of style and turgid *common-places*, so that nothing more could be achieved in that direction but by the most ridiculous bombast or the tamest servility; he has turned back partly from the bias of his mind, partly perhaps from a judicious policy—has struck into the sequestered vale of humble life, sought out the Muse among sheep-cotes and hamlets and the peasant's mountain-haunts, has discarded all the tinsel pageantry of verse, and endeavoured (not in vain) to aggrandise the trivial and add the charm of novelty to the familiar. No one has shown the same imagination in raising trifles into importance: no one has displayed the same pathos in treating of the simplest feelings of the heart. Reserved,

yet haughty, having no unruly or violent passions, (or those passions having been early suppressed,) Mr. Wordsworth has passed his life in solitary musing, or in daily converse with the face of nature. He exemplifies in an eminent degree the power of *association*; for his poetry has no other source or character. He has dwelt among pastoral scenes, till each object has become connected with a thousand feelings, a link in the chain of thought, a fibre of his own heart. Every one is by habit and familiarity strongly attached to the place of his birth, or to objects that recal the most pleasing and eventful circumstances of his life. But to the author of the *Lyrical Ballads*, nature is a kind of home; and he may be said to take a personal interest in the universe. There is no image so insignificant that it has not in some mood or other found the way into his heart: no sound that does not awaken the memory of other years.—

> 'To him the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.'

The daisy looks up to him with sparkling eye as an old acquaintance: the cuckoo haunts him with sounds of early youth not to be expressed: a linnet's nest startles him with boyish delight: an old withered thorn is weighed down with a heap of recollections: a grey cloak, seen on some wild moor, torn by the wind, or drenched in the rain, afterwards becomes an object of imagination to him: even the lichens on the rock have a life and being in his thoughts. He has described all these objects in a way and with an intensity of feeling that no one else had done before him, and has given a new view or aspect of nature. He is in this sense the most original poet now living, and the one whose writings could the least be spared: for they have no substitute elsewhere. The vulgar do not read them, the learned, who see all things through books, do not understand them, the great despise, the fashionable may ridicule them: but the author has created himself an interest in the heart of the retired and lonely student of nature, which can never die. Persons of this class will still continue to feel what he has felt: he has expressed what they might in vain wish to express, except with glistening eye and faultering tongue! There is a lofty philosophic tone, a thoughtful humanity, infused into his pastoral vein. Remote from the passions and events of the great world, he has communicated interest and dignity to the primal movements of the heart of man, and ingrafted his own conscious reflections on the casual thoughts of hinds and shepherds. Nursed amidst the grandeur of mountain scenery, he has stooped to have a nearer view of the daisy under his feet, or plucked a branch of white-thorn from the spray: but in describing it, his mind seems

imbued with the majesty and solemnity of the objects around him—the tall rock lifts its head in the erectness of his spirit; the cataract roars in the sound of his verse; and in its dim and mysterious meaning, the mists seem to gather in the hollows of Helvellyn, and the forked Skiddaw hovers in the distance. There is little mention of mountainous scenery in Mr. Wordsworth's poetry; but by internal evidence one might be almost sure that it was written in a mountainous country, from its bareness, its simplicity, its loftiness and its depth!

His later philosophic productions have a somewhat different character. They are a departure from, a dereliction of his first principles. They are classical and courtly. They are polished in style, without being gaudy; dignified in subject, without affectation. They seem to have been composed not in a cottage at Grasmere, but among the half-inspired groves and stately recollections of Cole-Orton. We might allude in particular, for examples of what we mean, to the lines on a Picture by Claude Lorraine, and to the exquisite poem, entitled *Laodamia*. The last of these breathes the pure spirit of the finest fragments of antiquity—the sweetness, the gravity, the strength, the beauty and the languor of death—

'Calm contemplation and majestic pains.'

Its glossy brilliancy arises from the perfection of the finishing, like that of careful sculpture, not from gaudy colouring—the texture of the thoughts has the smoothness and solidity of marble. It is a poem that might be read aloud in Elysium, and the spirits of departed heroes and sages would gather round to listen to it! Mr. Wordsworth's philosophic poetry, with a less glowing aspect and less tumult in the veins than Lord Byron's on similar occasions, bends a calmer and keener eye on mortality; the impression, if less vivid, is more pleasing and permanent; and we confess it (perhaps it is a want of taste and proper feeling) that there are lines and poems of our author's, that we think of ten times for once that we recur to any of Lord Byron's. Or if there are any of the latter's writings, that we can dwell upon in the same way, that is, as lasting and heart-felt sentiments, it is when laying aside his usual pomp and pretension, he descends with Mr. Wordsworth to the common ground of a disinterested humanity. It may be considered as characteristic of our poet's writings, that they either make no impression on the mind at all, seem mere *nonsense-verses*, or that they leave a mark behind them that never wears out. They either

'Fall blunted from the indurated breast'—

without any perceptible result, or they absorb it like a passion. To one class of readers he appears sublime, to another (and we fear the largest) ridiculous. He has probably realised Milton's wish, —'and fit audience found, though few'; but we suspect he is not reconciled to the alternative. There are delightful passages in the Excursion, both of natural description and of inspired reflection (passages of the latter kind that in the sound of the thoughts and of the swelling language resemble heavenly symphonies, mournful *requiems* over the grave of human hopes); but we must add, in justice and in sincerity, that we think it impossible that this work should ever become popular, even in the same degree as the *Lyrical Ballads*. It affects a system without having any intelligible clue to one; and instead of unfolding a principle in various and striking lights, repeats the same conclusions till they become flat and insipid. Mr. Wordsworth's mind is obtuse, except as it is the organ and the receptacle of accumulated feelings: it is not analytic, but synthetic; it is reflecting, rather than theoretical. The Excursion, we believe, fell still-born from the press. There was something abortive, and clumsy, and ill-judged in the attempt. It was long and laboured. The personages, for the most part, were low, the fare rustic: the plan raised expectations which were not fulfilled, and the effect was like being ushered into a stately hall and invited to sit down to a splendid banquet in the company of clowns, and with nothing but successive courses of apple-dumplings served up. It was not even *toujours perdrix*!

Mr. Wordsworth, in his person, is above the middle size, with marked features, and an air somewhat stately and Quixotic. He reminds one of some of Holbein's heads, grave, saturnine, with a slight indication of sly humour, kept under by the manners of the age or by the pretensions of the person. He has a peculiar sweetness in his smile, and great depth and manliness and a rugged harmony, in the tones of his voice. His manner of reading his own poetry is particularly imposing; and in his favourite passages his eye beams with preternatural lustre, and the meaning labours slowly up from his swelling breast. No one who has seen him at these moments could go away with an impression that he was a 'man of no mark or likelihood.' Perhaps the comment of his face and voice is necessary to convey a full idea of his poetry. His language may not be intelligible, but his manner is not to be mistaken. It is clear that he is either mad or inspired. In company, even in a *tête-à-tête*, Mr. Wordsworth is often silent, indolent, and reserved. If he is become verbose and oracular of late years, he was not so in his better days. He threw out a bold or an indifferent remark without either effort or pretension,

and relapsed into musing again. He shone most (because he seemed most roused and animated) in reciting his own poetry, or in talking about it. He sometimes gave striking views of his feelings and trains of association in composing certain passages; or if one did not always understand his distinctions, still there was a latent meaning worth inquiring into, like a vein of ore that one cannot exactly hit upon at the moment, but of which there are sure indications. His standard of poetry is high and severe, almost to exclusiveness. He admits of nothing below, scarcely of any thing above himself. It is fine to hear him talk of the way in which certain subjects should have been treated by eminent poets, according to his notions of the art. Thus he finds fault with Dryden's description of Bacchus in the *Alexander's Feast*, as if he were a mere good-looking youth, or boon companion—

> 'Flushed with a purple grace,
> He shows his honest face'—

instead of representing the God returning from the conquest of India, crowned with vine-leaves, and drawn by panthers, and followed by troops of satyrs, of wild men and animals that he had tamed. You would think, in hearing him speak on this subject, that you saw Titian's picture of the meeting of *Bacchus and Ariadne*—so classic were his conceptions, so glowing his style. Milton is his great idol, and he sometimes dares to compare himself with him. His Sonnets, indeed, have something of the same high raised tone and prophetic spirit. Chaucer is another prime favourite of his, and he has been at the pains to modernize some of the Canterbury Tales. Those persons who look upon Mr. Wordsworth as a merely puerile writer, must be rather at a loss to account for his strong predilection for such geniuses as Dante and Michael Angelo. We do not think our author has any very cordial sympathy with Shakespear. How should he? Shakespear was the least of an egotist of any body in the world. He does not much relish the variety and scope of dramatic composition. 'He hates those interlocutions between Lucius and Caius.' Yet Mr. Wordsworth himself wrote a tragedy when he was young; and we have heard the following energetic lines quoted from it, as put into the mouth of a person smit with remorse for some rash crime:

> ——— –'Action is momentary,
> The motion of a muscle this way or that;
> Suffering is long, obscure, and infinite!'

Perhaps for want of light and shade, and the unshackled spirit of the drama, this performance was never brought forward. Our critic has

a great dislike to Gray, and a fondness for Thomson and Collins. It is mortifying to hear him speak of Pope and Dryden, whom, because they have been supposed to have all the possible excellences of poetry, he will allow to have none. Nothing, however, can be fairer, or more amusing, than the way in which he sometimes exposes the unmeaning verbiage of modern poetry. Thus, in the beginning of Dr. Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*—

> 'Let observation with extensive view
> Survey mankind from China to Peru'—

he says there is a total want of imagination accompanying the words, the same idea is repeated three times under the disguise of a different phraseology: it comes to this—'let *observation*, with extensive *observation*, *observe* mankind'; or take away the first line, and the second,

> 'Survey mankind from China to Peru,'

literally conveys the whole. Mr. Wordsworth is, we must say, a perfect Drawcansir as to prose writers. He complains of the dry reasoners and matter-of-fact people for their want of *passion*; and he is jealous of the rhetorical declaimers and rhapsodists as trenching on the province of poetry. He condemns all French writers (as well of poetry as prose) in the lump. His list in this way is indeed small. He approves of Walton's Angler, Paley, and some other writers of an inoffensive modesty of pretension. He also likes books of voyages and travels, and Robinson Crusoe. In art, he greatly esteems Bewick's woodcuts, and Waterloo's sylvan etchings. But he sometimes takes a higher tone, and gives his mind fair play. We have known him enlarge with a noble intelligence and enthusiasm on Nicolas Poussin's fine landscape-compositions, pointing out the unity of design that pervades them, the superintending mind, the imaginative principle that brings all to bear on the same end; and declaring he would not give a rush for any landscape that did not express the time of day, the climate, the period of the world it was meant to illustrate, or had not this character of *wholeness* in it. His eye also does justice to Rembrandt's fine and masterly effects. In the way in which that artist works something out of nothing, and transforms the stump of a tree, a common figure into an *ideal* object, by the gorgeous light and shade thrown upon it, he perceives an analogy to his own mode of investing the minute details of nature with an atmosphere of sentiment; and in pronouncing Rembrandt to be a man of genius, feels that he strengthens his own claim to the title. It has been said of Mr. Wordsworth, that 'he hates conchology, that he hates the Venus of

Medicis.' But these, we hope, are mere epigrams and *jeux-d'esprit*, as far from truth as they are free from malice; a sort of running satire or critical clenches—

> 'Where one for sense and one for rhyme
> Is quite sufficient at one time.'

We think, however, that if Mr. Wordsworth had been a more liberal and candid critic, he would have been a more sterling writer. If a greater number of sources of pleasure had been open to him, he would have communicated pleasure to the world more frequently. Had he been less fastidious in pronouncing sentence on the works of others, his own would have been received more favourably, and treated more leniently. The current of his feelings is deep, but narrow; the range of his understanding is lofty and aspiring rather than discursive. The force, the originality, the absolute truth and identity with which he feels some things, makes him indifferent to so many others. The simplicity and enthusiasm of his feelings, with respect to nature, renders him bigotted and intolerant in his judgments of men and things. But it happens to him, as to others, that his strength lies in his weakness; and perhaps we have no right to complain. We might get rid of the cynic and the egotist, and find in his stead a commonplace man. We should 'take the good the Gods provide us': a fine and original vein of poetry is not one of their most contemptible gifts, and the rest is scarcely worth thinking of, except as it may be a mortification to those who expect perfection from human nature; or who have been idle enough at some period of their lives, to deify men of genius as possessing claims above it. But this is a chord that jars, and we shall not dwell upon it.

Lord Byron we have called, according to the old proverb, 'the spoiled child of fortune': Mr. Wordsworth might plead, in mitigation of some peculiarities, that he is 'the spoiled child of disappointment.' We are convinced, if he had been early a popular poet, he would have borne his honours meekly, and would have been a person of great *bonhommie* and frankness of disposition. But the sense of injustice and of undeserved ridicule sours the temper and narrows the views. To have produced works of genius, and to find them neglected or treated with scorn, is one of the heaviest trials of human patience. We exaggerate our own merits when they are denied by others, and are apt to grudge and cavil at every particle of praise bestowed on those to whom we feel a conscious superiority. In mere self-defence we turn against the world, when it turns against us; brood over the undeserved slights we receive; and thus the genial current of the soul is stopped, or vents itself in effusions of petulance

and self-conceit. Mr. Wordsworth has thought too much of contemporary critics and criticism; and less than he ought of the award of posterity, and of the opinion, we do not say of private friends, but of those who were made so by their admiration of his genius. He did not court popularity by a conformity to established models, and he ought not to have been surprised that his originality was not understood as a matter of course. He has *gnawed too much on the bridle*; and has often thrown out crusts to the critics, in mere defiance or as a point of honour when he was challenged, which otherwise his own good sense would have withheld. We suspect that Mr. Wordsworth's feelings are a little morbid in this respect, or that he resents censure more than he is gratified by praise. Otherwise, the tide has turned much in his favour of late years—he has a large body of determined partisans—and is at present sufficiently in request with the public to save or relieve him from the last necessity to which a man of genius can be reduced—that of becoming the God of his own idolatry!

SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH

The subject of the present article is one of the ablest and most accomplished men of the age, both as a writer, a speaker, and a converser. He is, in fact, master of almost every known topic, whether of a passing or of a more recondite nature. He has lived much in society, and is deeply conversant with books. He is a man of the world and a scholar; but the scholar gives the tone to all his other acquirements and pursuits. Sir James is by education and habit, and we were going to add, by the original turn of his mind, a college-man; and perhaps he would have passed his time most happily and respectably, had he devoted himself entirely to that kind of life. The strength of his faculties would have been best developed, his ambition would have met its proudest reward, in the accumulation and elaborate display of grave and useful knowledge. As it is, it may be said, that in company he talks well, but too much; that in writing he overlays the original subject and spirit of the composition, by an appeal to authorities and by too formal a method; that in public speaking the logician takes place of the orator, and that he fails to give effect to a particular point or to urge an immediate advantage home upon his adversary from the enlarged scope of his mind, and the wide career he takes in the field of argument.

To consider him in the last point of view, first. As a political

partisan, he is rather the lecturer than the advocate. He is able to instruct and delight an impartial and disinterested audience by the extent of his information, by his acquaintance with general principles, by the clearness and aptitude of his illustrations, by vigour and copiousness of style; but where he has a prejudiced or unfair antagonist to contend with, he is just as likely to put weapons into his enemy's hands, as to wrest them from him, and his object seems to be rather to deserve than to obtain success. The characteristics of his mind are retentiveness and comprehension, with facility of production: but he is not equally remarkable for originality of view, or warmth of feeling, or liveliness of fancy. His eloquence is a little rhetorical; his reasoning chiefly logical: he can bring down the account of knowledge on a vast variety of subjects to the present moment, he can embellish any cause he undertakes by the most approved and graceful ornaments, he can support it by a host of facts and examples, but he cannot advance it a step forward by placing it on a new and triumphant 'vantage-ground, nor can he overwhelm and break down the artificial fences and bulwarks of sophistry by the irresistible tide of manly enthusiasm. Sir James Mackintosh is an accomplished debater, rather than a powerful orator: he is distinguished more as a man of wonderful and variable talent than as a man of commanding intellect. His mode of treating a question is critical, and not parliamentary. It has been formed in the closet and the schools, and is hardly fitted for scenes of active life, or the collisions of party-spirit. Sir James reasons on the square; while the arguments of his opponents are loaded with iron or gold. He makes, indeed, a respectable ally, but not a very formidable opponent. He is as likely, however, to prevail on a neutral, as he is almost certain to be baffled on a hotly contested ground. On any question of general policy or legislative improvement, the Member for Nairn is heard with advantage, and his speeches are attended with effect: and he would have equal weight and influence at other times, if it were the object of the House to hear reason, as it is his aim to speak it. But on subjects of peace or war, of political rights or foreign interference, where the waves of party run high, and the liberty of nations or the fate of mankind hangs trembling in the scales, though he probably displays equal talent, and does full and heaped justice to the question (abstractedly speaking, or if it were to be tried before an impartial assembly), yet we confess we have seldom heard him, on such occasions, without pain for the event. He did not slur his own character and pretensions, but he compromised the argument. He spoke *the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth*; but the House of Commons (we dare aver it) is not the place where the

truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth can be spoken with safety or with advantage. The judgment of the House is not a balance to weigh scruples and reasons to the turn of a fraction: another element, besides the love of truth enters into the composition of their decisions, the reaction of which must be calculated upon and guarded against. If our philosophical statesman had to open the case before a class of tyros, or a circle of grey-beards, who wished to form or to strengthen their judgments upon fair and rational grounds, nothing could be more satisfactory, more luminous, more able or more decisive than the view taken of it by Sir James Mackintosh. But the House of Commons, as a collective body, have not the docility of youth, the calm wisdom of age; and often only want an excuse to do wrong, or to adhere to what they have already determined upon; and Sir James, in detailing the inexhaustible stores of his memory and reading, in unfolding the wide range of his theory and practice, in laying down the rules and the exceptions, in insisting upon the advantages and the objections with equal explicitness, would be sure to let something drop that a dexterous and watchful adversary would easily pick up and turn against him, if this were found necessary; or if with so many *pros* and *cons*, doubts and difficulties, dilemmas and alternatives thrown into it, the scale, with its natural bias to interest and power, did not already fly up and kick the beam. There wanted unity of purpose, impetuosity of feeling to break through the phalanx of hostile and inveterate prejudice arrayed against him. He gave a handle to his enemies; threw stumbling-blocks in the way of his friends. He raised so many objections for the sake of answering them, proposed so many doubts for the sake of solving them, and made so many concessions where none were demanded, that his reasoning had the effect of neutralizing itself; it became a mere exercise of the understanding without zest or spirit left in it; and the provident engineer who was to shatter in pieces the strong-holds of corruption and oppression, by a well-directed and unsparing discharge of artillery, seemed to have brought not only his own cannon-balls, but his own wool-packs along with him to ward off the threatened mischief. This was a good deal the effect of his maiden speech on the transfer of Genoa, to which Lord Castlereagh did not deign an answer, and which another Honourable Member called 'a *finical* speech.' It was a most able, candid, closely argued, and philosophical exposure of that unprincipled transaction; but for this very reason it was a solecism in the place where it was delivered. Sir James has, since this period, and with the help of practice, lowered himself to the tone of the House; and has also applied himself to questions more

congenial to his habits of mind, and where the success would be more likely to be proportioned to his zeal and his exertions.

There was a greater degree of power, or of dashing and splendid effect (we wish we could add, an equally humane and liberal spirit) in the *Lectures on the Law of Nature and Nations*, formerly delivered by Sir James (then Mr.) Mackintosh, in Lincoln's-Inn Hall. He showed greater confidence; was more at home there. The effect was more electrical and instantaneous, and this elicited a prouder display of intellectual riches, and a more animated and imposing mode of delivery. He grew wanton with success. Dazzling others by the brilliancy of his acquirements, dazzled himself by the admiration they excited, he lost fear as well as prudence; dared every thing, carried every thing before him. The Modern Philosophy, counter-scarp, outworks, citadel, and all, fell without a blow, by 'the whiff and wind of his fell *doctrine*,' as if it had been a pack of cards. The volcano of the French Revolution was seen expiring in its own flames, like a bonfire made of straw: the principles of Reform were scattered in all directions, like chaff before the keen northern blast. He laid about him like one inspired; nothing could withstand his envenomed tooth. Like some savage beast got into the garden of the fabled Hesperides, he made clear work of it, root and branch, with white, foaming tusks—

'Laid waste the borders, and o'erthrew the bowers.'

The havoc was amazing, the desolation was complete. As to our visionary sceptics and Utopian philosophers, they stood no chance with our lecturer—he did not 'carve them as a dish fit for the Gods, but hewed them as a carcase fit for hounds.' Poor Godwin, who had come, in the *bonhommie* and candour of his nature, to hear what new light had broken in upon his old friend, was obliged to quit the field, and slunk away after an exulting taunt thrown out at 'such fanciful chimeras as a golden mountain or a perfect man.' Mr. Mackintosh had something of the air, much of the dexterity and self-possession, of a political and philosophical juggler; and an eager and admiring audience gaped and greedily swallowed the gilded bait of sophistry, prepared for their credulity and wonder. Those of us who attended day after day, and were accustomed to have all our previous notions confounded and struck out of our hands by some metaphysical legerdemain, were at last at some loss to know *whether two and two made four*, till we had heard the lecturer's opinion on that head. He might have some mental reservation on the subject, some pointed ridicule to pour upon the common sup-

position, some learned authority to quote against it. To anticipate the line of argument he might pursue, was evidently presumptuous and premature. One thing only appeared certain, that whatever opinion he chose to take up, he was able to make good either by the foils or the cudgels, by gross banter or nice distinctions, by a well-timed mixture of paradox and common-place, by an appeal to vulgar prejudices or startling scepticism. It seemed to be equally his object, or the tendency of his Discourses, to unsettle every principle of reason or of common sense, and to leave his audience at the mercy of the *dictum* of a lawyer, the nod of a minister, or the shout of a mob. To effect this purpose, he drew largely on the learning of antiquity, on modern literature, on history, poetry, and the belles-lettres, on the Schoolmen and on writers of novels, French, English, and Italian. In mixing up the sparkling julep, that by its potent operation was to scour away the dregs and feculence and peccant humours of the body politic, he seemed to stand with his back to the drawers in a metaphysical dispensary, and to take out of them whatever ingredients suited his purpose. In this way he had an antidote for every error, an answer to every folly. The writings of Burke, Hume, Berkeley, Paley, Lord Bacon, Jeremy Taylor, Grotius, Puffendorf, Cicero, Aristotle, Tacitus, Livy, Sully, Machiavel, Guicciardini, Thuanus, lay open beside him, and he could instantly lay his hand upon the passage, and quote them chapter and verse to the clearing up of all difficulties, and the silencing of all oppugners. Mr. Mackintosh's Lectures were after all but a kind of philosophical centos. They were profound, brilliant, new to his hearers; but the profundity, the brilliancy, the novelty were not his own. He was like Dr. Pangloss (not Voltaire's, but Coleman's) who speaks only in quotations; and the pith, the marrow of Sir James's reasoning and rhetoric at that memorable period might be put within inverted commas. It, however, served its purpose and the loud echo died away. We remember an excellent man and a sound critic[1] going to hear one of these elaborate effusions; and on his want of enthusiasm being accounted for from its not being one of the orator's brilliant days, he replied, 'he did not think a man of genius could speak for two hours without saying something by which he would have been electrified.' We are only sorry, at this distance of time, for one thing in these Lectures—the tone and spirit in which they seemed to have been composed and to be delivered. If all that body of opinions and principles of which the orator read his recantation was unfounded, and there was an end of all those views and hopes that

[1] The late Rev. Joseph Fawcett, of Walthamstow.

pointed to future improvement, it was not a matter of triumph or exultation to the lecturer or any body else, to the young or the old, the wise or the foolish; on the contrary, it was a subject of regret, of slow, reluctant, painful admission—

'Of lamentation loud heard through the rueful air.'

The immediate occasion of this sudden and violent change in Sir James's views and opinions was attributed to a personal interview which he had had a little before his death with Mr. Burke, at his house at Beaconsfield. In the latter end of the year 1796, appeared the *Regicide Peace*, from the pen of the great apostate from liberty and betrayer of his species into the hands of those who claimed it as their property by divine right—a work imposing, solid in many respects, abounding in facts and admirable reasoning, and in which all flashy ornaments were laid aside for a testamentary gravity, (the eloquence of despair resembling the throes and heaving and muttered threats of an earthquake, rather than the loud thunderbolt)—and soon after came out a criticism on it in *The Monthly Review*, doing justice to the author and the style, and combating the inferences with force and at much length; but with candour and with respect, amounting to deference. It was new to Mr. Burke not to be called names by persons of the opposite party; it was an additional triumph to him to be spoken well of, to be loaded with well-earned praise by the author of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*. It was a testimony from an old, a powerful, and an admired antagonist.[1] He sent an invitation to the writer to come and see him; and in the course of three days' animated discussion of such subjects, Mr. Mackintosh became a convert not merely to the graces and gravity of Mr. Burke's style, but to the liberality of his views, and the solidity of his opinions.—The Lincoln's-Inn Lectures were the fruit of this interview: such is the influence exercised by men of genius and imaginative power over those who have nothing to oppose to their unforeseen flashes of thought and invention, but the dry, cold, formal, deductions of the understanding. Our politician had time, during a few years of absence from his native country, and while the din of war and the cries of party-spirit 'were lost over a wide and unhearing ocean,' to recover from his surprise and from a temporary alienation of mind; and to return in spirit, and in the mild and mellowed maturity of age, to the principles and attachments of his early life.

[1] At the time when the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* first made its appearance, as a reply to the *Reflections on the French Revolution*, it was cried up by the partisans of the new school, as a work superior in the charms of composition to its redoubted rival: in acuteness, depth, and soundness of reasoning, of course there was supposed to be no comparison.

SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH

The appointment of Sir James Mackintosh to a Judgeship in India was one, which, however flattering to his vanity or favourable to his interests, was entirely foreign to his feelings and habits. It was an honourable exile. He was out of his element among black slaves and sepoys, and Nabobs and cadets, and writers to India. He had no one to exchange ideas with. The 'unbought grace of life,' the charm of literary conversation was gone. It was the habit of his mind, his ruling passion to enter into the shock and conflict of opinions on philosophical, political, and critical questions—not to dictate to raw tyros or domineer over persons in subordinate situations—but to obtain the guerdon and the laurels of superior sense and information by meeting with men of equal standing, to have a fair field pitched, to argue, to distinguish, to reply, to hunt down the game of intellect with eagerness and skill, to push an advantage, to cover a retreat, to give and take a fall—

'And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach.'

It is no wonder that this sort of friendly intellectual gladiatorship is Sir James's greatest pleasure, for it is his peculiar *forte*. He has not many equals, and scarcely any superior in it. He is too indolent for an author; too unimpassioned for an orator: but in society he is just vain enough to be pleased with immediate attention, good-humoured enough to listen with patience to others, with great coolness and self-possession, fluent, communicative, and with a manner equally free from violence and insipidity. Few subjects can be started, on which he is not qualified to appear to advantage as the gentleman and scholar. If there is some tinge of pedantry, it is carried off by great affability of address and variety of amusing and interesting topics. There is scarce an author that he has not read; a period of history that he is not conversant with; a celebrated name of which he has not a number of anecdotes to relate; an intricate question that he is not prepared to enter upon in a popular or scientific manner. If an opinion in an abstruse metaphysical author is referred to, he is probably able to repeat the passage by heart, can tell the side of the page on which it is to be met with, can trace it back through various descents to Locke, Hobbes, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, to a place in some obscure folio of the School-men or a note in one of the commentators on Aristotle or Plato, and thus give you in a few moments' space, and without any effort or previous notice, a chronological table of the progress of the human mind in that particular branch of inquiry. There is something, we think, perfectly admirable and delightful in an exhibition of this kind, and which is equally creditable to the speaker and gratifying to the hearer. But this kind of talent was of

no use in India: the intellectual wares, of which the Chief Judge delighted to make a display, were in no request there. He languished after the friends and the society he had left behind; and wrote over incessantly for books from England. One that was sent him at this time was an *Essay on the Principles of Human Action*; and the way in which he spoke of that dry, tough, metaphysical *choke-pear*, showed the dearth of intellectual intercourse in which he lived, and the craving in his mind after those studies which had once been his pride, and to which he still turned for consolation in his remote solitude.—Perhaps to another, the novelty of the scene, the differences of mind and manners might have atoned for a want of social and literary *agrémens*: but Sir James is one of those who see nature through the spectacles of books. He might like to read an account of India; but India itself with its burning, shining face would be a mere blank, an endless waste to him. To persons of this class of mind things must be translated into words, visible images into abstract propositions to meet their refined apprehensions, and they have no more to say to a matter-of-fact staring them in the face without a label in its mouth, than they would to a hippopotamus!—We may add, before we quit this point, that we cannot conceive of any two persons more different in colloquial talents, in which they both excel, than Sir James Mackintosh and Mr. Coleridge. They have nearly an equal range of reading and of topics of conversation: but in the mind of the one we see nothing but *fixtures*, in the other every thing is fluid. The ideas of the one are as formal and tangible, as those of the other are shadowy and evanescent. Sir James Mackintosh walks over the ground, Mr. Coleridge is always flying off from it. The first knows all that has been said upon a subject; the last has something to say that was never said before. If the one deals too much in learned *common-places*, the other teems with idle fancies. The one has a good deal of the *caput mortuum* of genius, the other is all volatile salt. The conversation of Sir James Mackintosh has the effect of reading a well-written book, that of his friend is like hearing a bewildered dream. The one is an Encyclopedia of knowledge, the other is a succession of *Sybilline Leaves!*

As an author, Sir James Mackintosh may claim the foremost rank among those who pride themselves on artificial ornaments and acquired learning, or who write what may be termed a *composite* style. His *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* is a work of great labour, great ingenuity, great brilliancy, and great vigour. It is a little too antithetical in the structure of its periods, too dogmatical in the announcement of its opinions. Sir James has, we believe, rejected something of the *false brilliant* of the one, as he has retracted some of the abrupt extravagance

of the other. We apprehend, however, that our author is not one of those who draw from their own resources and accumulated feelings, or who improve with age. He belongs to a class (common in Scotland and elsewhere) who get up school-exercises on any given subject in a masterly manner at twenty, and who at forty are either where they were—or retrograde, if they are men of sense and modesty. The reason is, their vanity is weaned, after the first hey-day and animal spirits of youth are flown, from making an affected display of knowledge, which, however useful, is not their own, and may be much more simply stated; they are tired of repeating the same arguments over and over again, after having exhausted and rung the changes on their whole stock for a number of times. Sir James Mackintosh is understood to be a writer in the Edinburgh Review; and the articles attributed to him there are full of matter of great pith and moment. But they want the trim, pointed expression, the ambitious ornaments, the ostentatious display and rapid volubility of his early productions. We have heard it objected to his later compositions, that his style is good as far as single words and phrases are concerned, but that his sentences are clumsy and disjointed, and that these make up still more awkward and sprawling paragraphs. This is a nice criticism, and we cannot speak to its truth; but if the fact be so, we think we can account for it from the texture and obvious process of the author's mind. All his ideas may be said to be given preconceptions. They do not arise, as it were, out of the subject, or out of one another at the moment, and therefore do not flow naturally and gracefully from one another. They have been laid down beforehand in a sort of formal division or frame-work of the understanding; and the connection between the premises and the conclusion, between one branch of a subject and another, is made out in a bungling and unsatisfactory manner. There is no principle of fusion in the work; he strikes after the iron is cold, and there is a want of malleability in the style. Sir James is at present said to be engaged in writing a *History of England* after the downfall of the house of Stuart. May it be worthy of the talents of the author, and of the principles of the period it is intended to illustrate!

MR. MALTHUS

Mr. Malthus may be considered as one of those rare and fortunate writers who have attained a *scientific* reputation in questions of moral and political philosophy. His name undoubtedly stands very high in the present age, and will in all probability go down to posterity

with more or less of renown or obloquy. It was said by a person well qualified to judge both from strength and candour of mind, that 'it would take a thousand years at least to answer his work on Population.' He has certainly thrown a new light on that question, and changed the aspect of political economy in a decided and material point of view—whether he has not also endeavoured to spread a gloom over the hopes and more sanguine speculations of man, and to cast a slur upon the face of nature, is another question. There is this to be said for Mr. Malthus, that in speaking of him, one knows what one is talking about. He is something beyond a mere name—one has not to *beat the bush* about his talents, his attainments, his vast reputation, and leave off without knowing what it all amounts to —he is not one of those great men, who set themselves off and strut and fret an hour upon the stage, during a day-dream of popularity, with the ornaments and jewels borrowed from the common stock, to which nothing but their vanity and presumption gives them the least individual claim—he has dug into the mine of truth, and brought up ore mixed with dross! In weighing his merits we come at once to the question of what he has done or failed to do. It is a specific claim that he sets up. When we speak of Mr. Malthus, we mean the *Essay on Population*; and when we mention the Essay on Population, we mean a distinct leading proposition, that stands out intelligibly from all trashy pretence, and is a ground on which to fix the levers that may move the world, backwards or forwards. He has not left opinion where he found it; he has advanced or given it a wrong bias, or thrown a stumbling-block in its way. In a word, his name is not stuck, like so many others, in the firmament of reputation, nobody knows why, inscribed in great letters, and with a transparency of Talents, Genius, Learning blazing round it—it is tantamount to an idea, it is identified with a principle, it means that *the population cannot go on perpetually increasing without pressing on the limits of the means of subsistence, and that a check of some kind or other must, sooner or later, be opposed to it.* This is the essence of the doctrine which Mr. Malthus has been the first to bring into general notice, and as we think, to establish beyond the fear of contradiction. Admitting then as we do the prominence and the value of his claims to public attention, it yet remains a question, how far those claims are (as to the talent displayed in them) strictly original; how far (as to the logical accuracy with which he has treated the subject) he has introduced foreign and doubtful matter into it; and how far (as to the spirit in which he has conducted his inquiries, and applied a general principle to particular objects) he has only drawn fair and inevitable conclusions from it, or endeavoured to tamper with and wrest it to sinister and

servile purposes. A writer who shrinks from following up a well-founded principle into its untoward consequences from timidity or false delicacy, is not worthy of the name of a philosopher: a writer who assumes the garb of candour and an inflexible love of truth to garble and pervert it, to crouch to power and pander to prejudice, deserves a worse title than that of a sophist!

Mr. Malthus's first octavo volume on this subject (published in the year 1798) was intended as an answer to Mr. Godwin's *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*. It was well got up for the purpose, and had an immediate effect. It was what in the language of the ring is called *a facer*. It made Mr. Godwin and the other advocates of Modern Philosophy look about them. It may be almost doubted whether Mr. Malthus was in the first instance serious in many things that he threw out, or whether he did not hazard the whole as an amusing and extreme paradox, which might puzzle the reader as it had done himself in an idle moment, but to which no practical consequence whatever could attach. This state of mind would probably continue till the irritation of enemies and the encouragement of friends convinced him that what he had at first exhibited as an idle fancy was in fact a very valuable discovery, or 'like the toad ugly and venomous, had yet a precious jewel in its head.' Such a supposition would at least account for some things in the original Essay, which scarcely any writer would venture upon, except as professed exercises of ingenuity, and which have been since in part retracted. But a wrong bias was thus given, and the author's theory was thus rendered warped, disjointed, and sophistical from the very outset.

Nothing could in fact be more illogical (not to say absurd) than the whole of Mr. Malthus's reasoning applied as an answer (*par excellence*) to Mr. Godwin's book, or to the theories of other Utopian philosophers. Mr. Godwin was not singular, but was kept in countenance by many authorities, both ancient and modern, in supposing a state of society possible in which the passions and wills of individuals would be conformed to the general good, in which the knowledge of the best means of promoting human welfare and the desire of contributing to it would banish vice and misery from the world, and in which, the stumbling-blocks of ignorance, of selfishness, and the indulgence of gross appetite being removed, all things would move on by the mere impulse of wisdom and virtue, to still higher and higher degrees of perfection and happiness. Compared with the lamentable and gross deficiencies of existing institutions, such a view of futurity as barely possible could not fail to allure the gaze and tempt the aspiring thoughts of the philan-

thropist and the philosopher: the hopes and the imaginations of speculative men could not but rush forward into this ideal world as into a *vacuum* of good; and from 'the mighty stream of tendency' (as Mr. Wordsworth in the cant of the day calls it,) there was danger that the proud monuments of time-hallowed institutions, that the strong-holds of power and corruption, that 'the Corinthian capitals of polished society,' with the base and pediments, might be overthrown and swept away as by a hurricane. There were not wanting persons whose ignorance, whose fears, whose pride, or whose prejudices contemplated such an alternative with horror; and who would naturally feel no small obligation to the man who should relieve their apprehensions from the stunning roar of this mighty change of opinion that thundered at a distance, and should be able, by some logical apparatus or unexpected turn of the argument, to prevent the vessel of the state from being hurried forward with the progress of improvement, and dashed in pieces down the tremendous precipice of human perfectibility. Then comes Mr. Malthus forward with the geometrical and arithmetical ratios in his hands, and holds them out to his affrighted contemporaries as the only means of salvation. 'For' (so argued the author of the Essay) 'let the principles of Mr. Godwin's Enquiry and of other similar works be carried literally and completely into effect; let every corruption and abuse of power be entirely got rid of; let virtue, knowledge, and civilization be advanced to the greatest height that these visionary reformers would suppose; let the passions and appetites be subjected to the utmost control of reason and influence of public opinion: grant them, in a word, all that they ask, and the more completely their views are realized, the sooner will they be overthrown again, and the more inevitable and fatal will be the catastrophe. For the principle of population will still prevail, and from the comfort, ease, and plenty that will abound, will receive an increasing force and *impetus*; the number of mouths to be fed will have no limit, but the food that is to supply them cannot keep pace with the demand for it; we must come to a stop somewhere, even though each square yard, by extreme improvements in cultivation, could maintain its man: in this state of things there will be no remedy, the wholesome checks of vice and misery (which have hitherto kept this principle within bounds) will have been done away; the voice of reason will be unheard; the passions only will bear sway; famine, distress, havoc, and dismay will spread around; hatred, violence, war, and bloodshed will be the infallible consequence, and from the pinnacle of happiness, peace, refinement, and social advantage, we shall be hurled once more into a profounder abyss of misery, want, and

barbarism than ever, by the sole operation of the principle of population!'—Such is a brief abstract of the argument of the Essay. Can any thing be less conclusive, a more complete fallacy and *petitio principii*? Mr. Malthus concedes, he assumes a state of perfectibility, such as his opponents imagined, in which the general good is to obtain the entire mastery of individual interests, and reason of gross appetites and passions: and then he argues that such a perfect structure of society will fall by its own weight, or rather be undermined by the principle of population, because in the highest possible state of the subjugation of the passions to reason, they will be absolutely lawless and unchecked, and because as men become enlightened, quick sighted and public-spirited, they will show themselves utterly blind to the consequences of their actions, utterly indifferent to their own well-being and that of all succeeding generations, whose fate is placed in their hands. This we conceive to be the boldest paralogism that ever was offered to the world, or palmed upon willing credulity. Against whatever other scheme of reform this objection might be valid, the one it was brought expressly to overturn was impregnable against it, invulnerable to its slightest graze. Say that the Utopian reasoners are visionaries, unfounded; that the state of virtue and knowledge they suppose, in which reason shall have become all-in-all, can never take place, that it is inconsistent with the nature of man and with all experience, well and good—but to say that society will have attained this high and 'palmy state,' that reason will have become the master-key to all our motives, and that when arrived at its greatest power it will cease to act at all, but will fall down dead, inert, and senseless before the principle of population, is an opinion which one would think few people would choose to advance or assent to, without strong inducements for maintaining or believing it.

The fact, however, is, that Mr. Malthus found this argument entire (the principle and the application of it) in an obscure and almost forgotten work published about the middle of the last century, entitled *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature, and Providence*, by a Scotch gentleman of the name of Wallace. The chapter in this work on the Principle of Population, considered as a bar to all ultimate views of human improvement, was probably written to amuse an idle hour, or read as a paper to exercise the wits of some literary society in the Northern capital, and no farther responsibilty or importance annexed to it. Mr. Malthus, by adopting and setting his name to it, has given it sufficient currency and effect. It sometimes happens that one writer is the first to discover a certain principle or lay down a given observation, and that another makes an application of, or draws

a remote or an immediate inference from it, totally unforeseen by the first, and from which, in all probability, he might have widely dissented. But this is not so in the present instance. Mr. Malthus has borrowed (perhaps without consciousness, at any rate without acknowledgment) both the preliminary statement, that the increase in the supply of food 'from a limited earth and a limited fertility' must have an end, while the tendency to increase in the principle of population has none, without some external and forcible restraint on it, and the subsequent use made of this statement as an insuperable bar to all schemes of Utopian or progressive improvement—both these he has borrowed (whole) from Wallace, with all their imperfections on their heads, and has added more and greater ones to them out of his own store. In order to produce something of a startling and dramatic effect, he has strained a point or two. In order to quell and frighten away the bugbear of Modern Philosophy, he was obliged to make a sort of monster of the principle of population, which was brought into the field against it, and which was to swallow it up quick. No half-measures, no middle course of reasoning would do. With a view to meet the highest possible power of reason in the new order of things, Mr. Malthus saw the necessity of giving the greatest possible physical weight to the antagonist principle, and he accordingly lays it down that its operation is mechanical and irresistible. He premises these two propositions as the basis of all his reasoning, 1. *That food is necessary to man;* 2. *That the desire to propagate the species is an equally indispensable law of our existence*:—thus making it appear that these two wants or impulses are equal and coordinate principles of action. If this double statement had been true, the whole scope and structure of his reasoning (as hostile to human hopes and sanguine speculations) would have been irrefragable; but as it is not true, the whole (in that view) falls to the ground. According to Mr. Malthus's octavo edition, the sexual passion is as necessary to be gratified as the appetite of hunger, and a man can no more exist without propagating his species than he can live without eating. Were it so, neither of these passions would admit of any excuses, any delay, any restraint from reason or foresight; and the only checks to the principle of population must be vice and misery. The argument would be triumphant and complete. But there is no analogy, no parity in the two cases, such as our author here assumes. No man can live for any length of time without food; many persons live all their lives without gratifying the other sense. The longer the craving after food is unsatisfied, the more violent, imperious, and uncontroulable the desire becomes; whereas the longer the gratification of the sexual passion is resisted, the greater force does habit and

resolution acquire over it; and, generally speaking, it is a well-known fact, attested by all observation and history, that this latter passion is subject more or less to controul from personal feelings and character, from public opinions and the institutions of society, so as to lead either to a lawful and regulated indulgence, or to partial or total abstinence, according to the dictates of *moral restraint*, which latter check to the inordinate excesses and unheard-of consequences of the principle of population, our author, having no longer an extreme case to make out, admits and is willing to patronize in addition to the two former and exclusive ones of *vice* and *misery*, in the second and remaining editions of his work. Mr. Malthus has shown some awkwardness or even reluctance in softening down the harshness of his first peremptory decision. He sometimes grants his grand exception cordially, proceeds to argue stoutly, and to try conclusions upon it; at other times he seems disposed to cavil about or retract it:—'the influence of moral restraint is very inconsiderable, or none at all.' It is indeed difficult (more particularly for so formal and nice a reasoner as Mr. Malthus) to piece such contradictions plausibly or gracefully together. We wonder how *he* manages it—how *any one* should attempt it! The whole question, the *gist* of the argument of his early volume turned upon this, 'Whether vice and misery were the *only* actual or possible checks to the principle of population?' He then said they were, and farewell to building castles in the air: he now says that *moral restraint* is to be coupled with these, and that its influence depends greatly on the state of laws and manners—and Utopia stands where it did, a great way off indeed, but not turned *topsy-turvy* by our magician's wand! Should we ever arrive there, that is, attain to a state of *perfect moral restraint*, we shall not be driven headlong back into Epicurus's stye for want of the only possible checks to population, *vice* and *misery*; and in proportion as we advance that way, that is, as the influence of moral restraint is extended, the necessity for vice and misery will be diminished, instead of being increased according to the first alarm given by the Essay. Again, the advance of civilization and of population in consequence with the same degree of moral restraint (as there exists in England at this present time, for instance) is a good, and not an evil—but this does not appear from the Essay. The Essay shows that population is not (as had been sometimes taken for granted) an abstract and unqualified good; but it led many persons to suppose that it was an abstract and unqualified evil, to be checked only by vice and misery; and producing, according to its encouragement a greater quantity of vice and misery; and this error the author has not been at sufficient pains to do away. Another thing, in which Mr. Malthus attempted to *clench* Wallace's argument,

was in giving to the disproportionate power of increase in the principle of population and the supply of food a mathematical form, or reducing it to the arithmetical and geometrical ratios, in which we believe Mr. Malthus is now generally admitted, even by his friends and admirers, to have been wrong. There is evidently no inherent difference in the principle of increase in food or population; since a grain of corn, for example, will propagate and multiply itself much faster even than the human species. A bushel of wheat will sow a field; that field will furnish seed for twenty others. So that the limit to the means of subsistence is only the want of room to raise it in, or, as Wallace expresses it, 'a limited fertility and a limited earth.' Up to the point where the earth or any given country is fully occupied or cultivated, the means of subsistence naturally increase in a geometrical ratio, and will more than keep pace with the natural and unrestrained progress of population; and beyond that point, they do not go on increasing even in Mr. Malthus's arithmetical ratio, but are stationary or nearly so. So far, then, is this proportion from being universally and mathematically true, that in no part of the world or state of society does it hold good. But our theorist, by laying down this double ratio as a law of nature, gains this advantage, that at all times it seems as if, whether in new or old-peopled countries, in fertile or barren soils, the population was pressing hard on the means of subsistence; and again, it seems as if the evil increased with the progress of improvement and civilization; for if you cast your eye at the scale which is supposed to be calculated upon true and infallible *data*, you find that when the population is at 8, the means of subsistence are at 4; so that here there is only a *deficit* of one-half; but when it is at 32, they have only got to 6, so that here there is a difference of 26 in 32, and so on in proportion; the farther we proceed, the more enormous is the mass of vice and misery we must undergo, as a consequence of the natural excess of the population over the means of subsistence and as a salutary check to its farther desolating progress. The mathematical Table, placed at the front of the Essay, therefore leads to a secret suspicion or a barefaced assumption, that we ought in mere kindness and compassion to give every sort of indirect and under-hand encouragement (to say the least) to the providential checks of vice and misery; as the sooner we arrest this formidable and paramount evil in its course, the less opportunity we leave it of doing incalculable mischief. Accordingly, whenever there is the least talk of colonizing new countries, of extending the population, or adding to social comforts and improvements, Mr. Malthus conjures up his double ratios, and insists on the alarming results of advancing them a single step forward in the series. By the same rule, it would

be better to return at once to a state of barbarism; and to take the benefit of acorns and scuttle-fish, as a security against the luxuries and wants of civilized life. But it is not our ingenious author's wish to hint at or recommend any alterations in existing institutions; and he is therefore silent on that unpalatable part of the subject and natural inference from his principles.

Mr. Malthus's 'gospel is preached to the poor.' He lectures them on economy, on morality, the regulation of their passions (which, he says, at other times, are amenable to no restraint) and on the ungracious topic, that 'the laws of nature, which are the laws of God, have doomed them and their families to starve for want of a right to the smallest portion of food beyond what their labour will supply, or some charitable hand may hold out in compassion.' This is illiberal, and it is not philosophical. The laws of nature or of God, to which the author appeals, are no other than a limited fertility and a limited earth. Within those bounds, the rest is regulated by the laws of man. The division of the produce of the soil, the price of labour, the relief afforded to the poor, are matters of human arrangement: while any charitable hand can extend relief, it is a proof that the means of subsistence are not exhausted in themselves, that the 'tables are not full!' Mr. Malthus says that the laws of nature, which are the laws of God, have rendered that relief physically impossible; and yet he would abrogate the poor-laws by an act of the legislature, in order to take away that *impossible* relief, which the laws of God deny, and which the laws of man *actually* afford. We cannot think that this view of his subject, which is prominent and dwelt on at great length and with much pertinacity, is dictated either by rigid logic or melting charity! A labouring man is not allowed to knock down a hare or a partridge that spoils his garden: a country-squire keeps a pack of hounds: a lady of quality rides out with a footman behind her, on two sleek, well-fed horses. We have not a word to say against all this as exemplifying the spirit of the English Constitution, as a part of the law of the land, or as an artful distribution of light and shade in the social picture; but if any one insists at the same time that 'the laws of nature, which are the laws of God, have doomed the poor and their families to starve,' because the principle of population has encroached upon and swallowed up the means of subsistence, so that not a mouthful of food is left *by the grinding law of necessity* for the poor, we beg leave to deny both fact and inference—and we put it to Mr. Malthus whether we are not, in strictness, justified in doing so?

We have, perhaps, said enough to explain our feeling on the subject of Mr. Malthus's merits and defects. We think he had the

opportunity and the means in his hands of producing a great work on the principle of population; but we believe he has let it slip from his having an eye to other things besides that broad and unexplored question. He wished not merely to advance to the discovery of certain great and valuable truths, but at the same time to overthrow certain unfashionable paradoxes by exaggerated statements—to curry favour with existing prejudices and interests by garbled representations. He has, in a word, as it appears to us on a candid retrospect and without any feelings of controversial asperity rankling in our minds, sunk the philosopher and the friend of his species (a character to which he might have aspired) in the sophist and party-writer. The period at which Mr. Malthus came forward teemed with answers to Modern Philosophy, with antidotes to liberty and humanity, with abusive Histories of the Greek and Roman republics, with fulsome panegyrics on the Roman Emperors (at the very time when we were reviling Buonaparte for his strides to universal empire) with the slime and offal of desperate servility—and we cannot but consider the Essay as one of the poisonous ingredients thrown into the cauldron of Legitimacy 'to make it thick and slab.' Our author has, indeed, so far done service to the cause of truth, that he has counteracted many capital errors formerly prevailing as to the universal and indiscriminate encouragement of population under all circumstances; but he has countenanced opposite errors, which if adopted in theory and practice would be even more mischievous, and has left it to future philosophers to follow up the principle, that some check must be provided for the unrestrained progress of population, into a set of wiser and more humane consequences. Mr. Godwin has lately attempted an answer to the Essay (thus giving Mr. Malthus a *Roland for his Oliver*) but we think he has judged ill in endeavouring to invalidate the principle, instead of confining himself to point out the misapplication of it. There is one argument introduced in this Reply, which will, perhaps, amuse the reader as a sort of metaphysical puzzle.

'It has sometimes occurred to me whether Mr. Malthus did not catch the first hint of his geometrical ratio from a curious passage of Judge Blackstone, on consanguinity, which is as follows:—

'The doctrine of lineal consanguinity is sufficiently plain and obvious; but it is at the first view astonishing to consider the number of lineal ancestors which every man has within no very great number of degrees; and so many different bloods is a man said to contain in his veins, as he hath lineal ancestors. Of these he hath two in the first ascending degree, his own parents; he hath four in the second, the parents of his father and the parents of his mother; he hath eight in the third, the parents of his two grandfathers and two grand-

mothers; and by the same rule of progression, he hath an hundred and twenty-eight in the seventh; a thousand and twenty-four in the tenth; and at the twentieth degree, or the distance of twenty generations, every man hath above a million of ancestors, as common arithmetic will demonstrate.

'This will seem surprising to those who are unacquainted with the increasing power of progressive numbers; but is palpably evident from the following table of a geometrical progression, in which the first term is 2, and the denominator also 2; or, to speak more intelligibly, it is evident, for that each of us has two ancestors in the first degree; the number of which is doubled at every remove, because each of our ancestors had also two ancestors of his own.

Lineal Degrees.	*Number of Ancestors.*
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128
8	256
9	512
10	1024
11	2048
12	4096
13	8192
14	16,384
15	32,768
16	65,536
17	131,072
18	262,144
19	524,288
20	1,048,576

'This argument, however,' (proceeds Mr. Godwin) 'from Judge Blackstone of a geometrical progression would much more naturally apply to Montesquieu's hypothesis of the depopulation of the world, and prove that the human species is hastening fast to extinction, than to the purpose for which Mr. Malthus has employed it. An ingenious sophism might be raised upon it, to show that the race of mankind will ultimately terminate in unity. Mr. Malthus, indeed, should have reflected, that it is much more certain that every man has had ancestors than that he will have posterity, and that it is still more doubtful, whether he will have posterity to twenty or to an indefinite number of generations.'—ENQUIRY CONCERNING POPULATION, p. 100.

Mr. Malthus's style is correct and elegant; his tone of controversy mild and gentlemanly; and the care with which he has brought his facts and documents together, deserves the highest praise. He has lately quitted his favourite subject of population, and broke a lance with Mr. Ricardo on the question of rent and value. The partisans of Mr. Ricardo, who are also the admirers of Mr. Malthus, say that the usual sagacity of the latter has here failed him, and that he has shown himself to be a very illogical writer. To have said this of him formerly on another ground, was accounted a heresy and a piece of presumption not easily to be forgiven. Indeed Mr. Malthus has always been a sort of 'darling in the public eye,' whom it was unsafe to meddle with. He has contrived to make himself as many friends by his attacks on the schemes of *Human Perfectibility* and on the *Poor-Laws*, as Mandeville formerly procured enemies by his attacks on *Human Perfections* and on *Charity-Schools*; and among other instances that we might mention, *Plug* Pulteney, the celebrated miser, of whom Mr. Burke said on his having a large estate left him, 'that now it was to be hoped he would *set up a pocket-handkerchief*,' was so enamoured with the saving schemes and humane economy of the Essay, that he desired a friend to find out the author and offer him a church living! This liberal intention was (by design or accident) unhappily frustrated.

MR. GIFFORD

Mr. Gifford was originally bred to some handicraft: he afterwards contrived to learn Latin, and was for some time an usher in a school, till he became a tutor in a nobleman's family. The low-bred, self-taught man, the pedant, and the dependant on the great contribute to form the Editor of the *Quarterly Review*. He is admirably qualified for this situation, which he has held for some years, by a happy combination of defects, natural and acquired; and in the event of his death, it will be difficult to provide him a suitable successor.

Mr. Gifford has no pretensions to be thought a man of genius, of taste, or even of general knowledge. He merely understands the mechanical and instrumental part of learning. He is a critic of the last age, when the different editions of an author, or the dates of his several performances were all that occupied the inquiries of a profound scholar, and the spirit of the writer or the beauties of his style were left to shift for themselves, or exercise the fancy of the light and superficial reader. In studying an old author, he

has no notion of any thing beyond adjusting a point, proposing a different reading, or correcting, by the collation of various copies, an error of the press. In appreciating a modern one, if it is an enemy, the first thing he thinks of is to charge him with bad grammar—he scans his sentences instead of weighing his sense; or if it is a friend, the highest compliment he conceives it possible to pay him is, that his thoughts and expressions are moulded on some hackneyed model. His standard of *ideal* perfection is what he himself now is, a person of *mediocre* literary attainments: his utmost contempt is shown by reducing any one to what he himself once was, a person without the ordinary advantages of education and learning. It is accordingly assumed, with much complacency in his critical pages, that Tory writers are classical and courtly as a matter of course; as it is a standing jest and evident truism, that Whigs and Reformers must be persons of low birth and breeding—imputations from one of which he himself has narrowly escaped, and both of which he holds in suitable abhorrence. He stands over a contemporary performance with all the self-conceit and self-importance of a country schoolmaster, tries it by technical rules, affects not to understand the meaning, examines the hand-writing, the spelling, shrugs up his shoulders and chuckles over a slip of the pen, and keeps a sharp look-out for a false concord and—a flogging. There is nothing liberal, nothing humane in his style of judging: it is altogether petty, captious, and literal. The Editor's political subserviency adds the last finishing to his ridiculous pedantry and vanity. He has all his life been a follower in the train of wealth and power—strives to back his pretensions on Parnassus by a place at court, and to gild his reputation as a man of letters by the smile of greatness. He thinks his works are stamped with additional value by having his name in the *Red-Book*. He looks up to the distinctions of rank and station as he does to those of learning, with the gross and overweening adulation of his early origin. All his notions are low, upstart, servile. He thinks it the highest honour to a poet to be patronised by a peer or by some dowager of quality. He is prouder of a court-livery than of a laurel-wreath; and is only sure of having established his claims to respectability by having sacrificed those of independence. He is a retainer to the Muses; a door-keeper to learning; a lacquey in the state. He believes that modern literature should wear the fetters of classical antiquity; that truth is to be weighed in the scales of opinion and prejudice; that power is equivalent to right; that genius is dependent on rules; that taste and refinement of language consist in *word-catching*. Many persons suppose that Mr. Gifford knows better than he pretends; and that

he is shrewd, artful, and designing. But perhaps it may be nearer the mark to suppose that his dulness is guarantee for his sincerity; or that before he is the tool of the profligacy of others, he is the dupe of his own jaundiced feelings, and narrow, hood-winked perceptions.

> 'Destroy his fib or sophistry: in vain—
> The creature 's at his dirty work again!'

But this is less from choice or perversity, than because he cannot help it and can do nothing else. He damns a beautiful expression less out of spite than because he really does not understand it: any novelty of thought or sentiment gives him a shock from which he cannot recover for some time, and he naturally takes his revenge for the alarm and uneasiness occasioned him, without referring to venal or party motives. He garbles an author's meaning, not so much wilfully, as because it is a pain to him to enlarge his microscopic view to take in the context, when a particular sentence or passage has struck him as quaint and out of the way: he fly-blows an author's style, and picks out detached words and phrases for cynical reprobation, simply because he feels himself at home, or takes a pride and pleasure in this sort of petty warfare. He is tetchy and impatient of contradiction; sore with wounded pride; angry at obvious faults, more angry at unforeseen beauties. He has the *chalk-stones* in his understanding, and from being used to long confinement, cannot bear the slightest jostling or irregularity of motion. He may call out with the fellow in the *Tempest*—'I am not Stephano, but a cramp!' He would go back to the standard of opinions, style, the faded ornaments, and insipid formalities that came into fashion about forty years ago. Flashes of thought, flights of fancy, idiomatic expressions, he sets down among the signs of the times—the extraordinary occurrences of the age we live in. They are marks of a restless and revolutionary spirit: they disturb his composure of mind, and threaten (by implication) the safety of the state. His slow, snail-paced, bed-rid habits of reasoning, cannot keep up with the whirling, eccentric motion, the rapid, perhaps extravagant combinations of modern literature. He has long been stationary himself, and is determined that others shall remain so. The hazarding a paradox is like letting off a pistol close to his ear: he is alarmed and offended. The using an elliptical mode of expression (such as he did not use to find in Guides to the English Tongue) jars him like coming suddenly to a step in a flight of stairs that you were not aware of. He *pishes* and *pshaws* at all this, exercises a sort of interjectional criticism on what excites his spleen, his envy, or his

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wonder, and hurls his meagre anathemas *ex cathedrâ* at all those writers who are indifferent alike to his precepts and his example!

Mr. Gifford, in short, is possessed of that sort of learning which is likely to result from an over-anxious desire to supply the want of the first rudiments of education; that sort of wit, which is the offspring of ill-humour or bodily pain; that sort of sense, which arises from a spirit of contradiction and a disposition to cavil at and dispute the opinions of others; and that sort of reputation, which is the consequence of bowing to established authority and ministerial influence. He dedicates to some great man, and receives his compliments in return. He appeals to some great name, and the Under-graduates of the two Universities look up to him as an oracle of wisdom. He throws the weight of his verbal criticism and puny discoveries in *black-letter* reading into the gap, that is supposed to be making in the Constitution by Whigs and Radicals, whom he qualifies without mercy as dunces and miscreants; and so entitles himself to the protection of Church and State. The character of his mind is an utter want of independence and magnanimity in all that he attempts. He cannot go alone, he must have crutches, a go-cart and trammels, or he is timid, fretful, and helpless as a child. He cannot conceive of any thing different from what he finds it, and hates those who pretend to a greater reach of intellect or boldness of spirit than himself. He inclines, by a natural and deliberate bias, to the traditional in laws and government; to the orthodox in religion; to the safe in opinion; to the trite in imagination; to the technical in style; to whatever implies a surrender of individual judgment into the hands of authority, and a subjection of individual feeling to mechanic rules. If he finds any one flying in the face of these, or straggling from the beaten path, he thinks he has them at a notable disadvantage, and falls foul of them without loss of time, partly to soothe his own sense of mortified self-consequence, and as an edifying spectacle to his legitimate friends. He takes none but unfair advantages. He *twits* his adversaries (that is, those who are not in the leading-strings of his school or party) with some personal or accidental defect. If a writer has been punished for a political libel, he is sure to hear of it in a literary criticism. If a lady goes on crutches and is out of favour at court, she is reminded of it in Mr. Gifford's manly satire. He sneers at people of low birth or who have not had a college education, partly to hide his own want of certain advantages, partly as well-timed flattery to those who possess them. He has a right to laugh at poor, unfriended, untitled genius from wearing the livery of rank and letters, as footmen behind a coronet-coach laugh at the rabble. He keeps good

company, and forgets himself. He stands at the door of Mr. Murray's shop, and will not let any body pass but the well-dressed mob, or some followers of the court. To edge into the *Quarterly* Temple of Fame the candidate must have a diploma from the Universities, a passport from the Treasury. Otherwise, it is a breach of etiquette to let him pass, an insult to the better sort who aspire to the love of letters—and may chance to drop in to the *Feast of the Poets*. Or, if he cannot manage it thus, or get rid of the claim on the bare ground of poverty or want of school-learning, he *trumps* up an excuse for the occasion, such as that 'a man was confined in Newgate a short time before'—it is not a *lie* on the part of the critic, it is only an amiable subserviency to the will of his betters, like that of a menial who is ordered to deny his master, a sense of propriety, a knowledge of the world, a poetical and moral license. Such fellows (such is his cue from his employers) should at any rate be kept out of privileged places: persons who have been convicted of prose-libels ought not to be suffered to write poetry—if the fact was not exactly as it was stated, it was something of the kind, or it *ought* to have been so, the assertion was a pious fraud,—the public, the court, the prince himself might read the work, but for this mark of opprobrium set upon it—it was not to be endured that an insolent plebeian should aspire to elegance, taste, fancy—it was throwing down the barriers which ought to separate the higher and the lower classes, the loyal and the disloyal—the paraphrase of the story of Dante was therefore to perform quarantine, it was to seem not yet recovered from the gaol infection, there was to be a taint upon it, as there was none in it—and all this was performed by a single slip of Mr. Gifford's pen! We would willingly believe (if we could) that in this case there was as much weakness and prejudice as there was malice and cunning.—Again, we do not think it possible that under any circumstances the writer of the *Verses to Anna* could enter into the spirit or delicacy of Mr. Keats's poetry. The fate of the latter somewhat resembled that of

> 'a bud bit by an envious worm,
> Ere it could spread its sweet leaves to the air,
> Or dedicate its beauty to the sun.'

Mr. Keats's ostensible crime was that he had been praised in the *Examiner Newspaper*: a greater and more unpardonable offence probably was, that he was a true poet, with all the errors and beauties of youthful genius to answer for. Mr. Gifford was as insensible to the one as he was inexorable to the other. Let the reader judge

from the two subjoined specimens how far the one writer could ever, without a presumption equalled only by a want of self-knowledge, set himself in judgment on the other.

'Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke in pallid moonshine died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air and visions wide:
No utter'd syllable, or woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her heart in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

'A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

'Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for Heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

'Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant boddice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

'Soon trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away

Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day:
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.'

EVE OF ST. AGNES.

With the rich beauties and the dim obscurities of lines like these, let us contrast the Verses addressed *To a Tuft of early Violets* by the fastidious author of the Baviad and Mæviad.—

'Sweet flowers! that from your humble beds
Thus prematurely dare to rise,
And trust your unprotected heads
To cold Aquarius' watery skies.

'Retire, retire! *These* tepid airs
Are not the genial brood of May;
That sun with light malignant glares,
And flatters only to betray.

'Stern Winter's reign is not yet past—
Lo! while your buds prepare to blow,
On icy pinions comes the blast,
And nips your root, and lays you low.

'Alas, for such ungentle doom!
But I will shield you; and supply
A kindlier soil on which to bloom,
A nobler bed on which to die.

'Come then—'ere yet the morning ray
Has drunk the dew that gems your crest,
And drawn your balmiest sweets away;
O come and grace my Anna's breast.

'Ye droop, fond flowers! But did ye know
What worth, what goodness there reside,
Your cups with liveliest tints would glow;
And spread their leaves with conscious pride.

'For there has liberal Nature joined
Her riches to the stores of Art,
And added to the vigorous mind
The soft, the sympathising heart.

'Come then—'ere yet the morning ray
Has drunk the dew that gems your crest,
And drawn your balmiest sweets away;
O come and grace my Anna's breast.

'O! I should think—*that fragrant bed*
Might I but hope with you to share—[1]
Years of anxiety repaid
By one short hour of transport there.

'More blest than me, thus shall ye live
Your little day; and when ye die,
Sweet flowers! the grateful Muse shall give
A verse; the sorrowing maid, a sigh.

'While I alas! no distant date,
Mix with the dust from whence I came,
Without a friend to weep my fate,
Without a stone to tell my name.'

We subjoin one more specimen of these 'wild strains'[2] said to be '*Written two years after the preceding.*' Ecce iterum Crispinus.

'I wish I was where Anna lies;
For I am sick of lingering here,
And every hour Affection cries,
Go, and partake her humble bier.

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[1] What an awkward bedfellow for a tuft of violets!

[2] 'How oft, O Dart! what time the faithful pair
Walk'd forth, the fragrant hour of eve to share,
On thy romantic banks, have my *wild strains*
(Not yet forgot amidst my native plains)
While thou hast sweetly gurgled down the vale,
Filled up the pause of love's delightful tale!
While, ever as she read, the conscious maid,
By faultering voice and downcast looks betray'd,
Would blushing on her lover's neck recline,
And with her finger—point the tenderest line!'

Mæviad, pp. 194, 202.

Yet the author assures us just before, that in these 'wild strains' 'all was plain.'

'Even then (admire, John Bell! my simple ways)
No heaven and hell danced madly through my lays,
No oaths, no execrations; *all was plain*;
Yet trust me, while thy ever jingling train
Chime their sonorous woes with frigid art,
And shock the reason and revolt the heart;
My hopes and fears, in nature's language drest,
Awakened love in many a gentle breast.'

Ibid., v. 185-92.

If any one else had composed these 'wild strains,' in which 'all is plain,' Mr. Gifford would have accused them of three things. '1. Downright nonsense. 2. Downright frigidity. 3. Downright doggrel;' and proceeded to anatomise them very cordially in his way. As it is, he is thrilled with a very pleasing horror at his former scenes of tenderness, and 'gasps at the recollection' 'of *watery Aquarius!*' *he! jam satis est!* 'Why rack a grub—a butterfly upon a wheel?'

'I wish I could! for when she died
I lost my all; and life has prov'd
Since that sad hour a dreary void,
A waste unlovely and unlov'd.

'But who, when I am turned to clay,
Shall duly to her grave repair,
And pluck the ragged moss away,
And weeds that have "no business there?"

'And who, with pious hand, shall bring
The flowers she cherish'd, snow-drops cold,
And violets that unheeded spring,
To scatter o'er her hallowed mould?

'And who, while Memory loves to dwell
Upon her name for ever dear,
Shall feel his heart with passions swell,
And pour the bitter, bitter tear?

'I DID IT; and would fate allow,
Should visit still, should still deplore—
But health and strength have left me now,
But I, alas! can weep no more.

'Take then, sweet maid! this simple strain,
The last I offer at thy shrine;
Thy grave must then undeck'd remain,
And all thy memory fade with mine.

'And can thy soft persuasive look,
That voice that might with music vie,
Thy air that every gazer took,
Thy matchless eloquence of eye,

'Thy spirits, frolicsome as good,
Thy courage, by no ills dismay'd,
Thy patience, by no wrongs subdued,
Thy gay good-humour—can they "fade?"

'Perhaps—but sorrow dims my eye:
Cold turf, which I no more must view,
Dear name, which I no more must sigh,
A long, a last, a sad adieu!'

It may be said in extenuation of the low, mechanic vein of these impoverished lines, that they were written at an early age—they were the inspired production of a youthful lover! Mr. Gifford was thirty when he wrote them, Mr. Keats died when he was scarce twenty! Farther it may be said, that Mr. Gifford hazarded his

first poetical attempts under all the disadvantages of a neglected education: but the same circumstance, together with a few unpruned redundancies of fancy and quaintnesses of expression, was made the plea on which Mr. Keats was hooted out of the world, and his fine talents and wounded sensibilities consigned to an early grave. In short, the treatment of this heedless candidate for poetical fame might serve as a warning, and was intended to serve as a warning to all unfledged tyros, how they venture upon any such doubtful experiments, except under the auspices of some lord of the bed-chamber or Government Aristarchus, and how they imprudently associate themselves with men of mere popular talent or independence of feeling!—It is the same in prose works. The Editor scorns to enter the lists of argument with any proscribed writer of the opposite party. He does not refute, but denounces him. He makes no concessions to an adversary, lest they should in some way be turned against him. He only feels himself safe in the fancied insignificance of others: he only feels himself superior to those whom he stigmatizes as the lowest of mankind. All persons are without common-sense and honesty who do not believe implicitly (with him) in the immaculateness of Ministers and the divine origin of Kings. Thus he informed the world that the author of TABLE-TALK was a person who could not write a sentence of common English and could hardly spell his own name, because he was not a friend to the restoration of the Bourbons, and had the assurance to write *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* in a style of criticism somewhat different from Mr. Gifford's. He charged this writer with imposing on the public by a flowery style; and when the latter ventured to refer to a work of his, called *An Essay on the Principles of Human Action*, which has not a single ornament in it, as a specimen of his original studies and the proper bias of his mind, the learned critic, with a shrug of great self-satisfaction, said, 'It was amusing to see this person, sitting like one of Brouwer's Dutch boors over his gin and tobacco-pipes, and fancying himself a Leibnitz!' The question was, whether the subject of Mr. Gifford's censure had ever written such a work or not; for if he had, he had amused himself with something besides gin and tobacco-pipes. But our Editor, by virtue of the situation he holds, is superior to facts or arguments: he is accountable neither to the public nor to authors for what he says of them, but owes it to his employers to prejudice the work and vilify the writer, if the latter is not avowedly ready to range himself on the stronger side.—The *Quarterly Review*, besides the political *tirades* and denunciations of suspected writers, intended for the guidance of the heads of families, is filled up with accounts of books of Voyages and Travels for the

amusement of the younger branches. The poetical department is almose a sinecure, consisting of mere summary decisions and a list of quotations. Mr. Croker is understood to contribute the St. Helena articles and the liberality, Mr. Canning the practical good sense, Mr. D'Israeli the good-nature, Mr. Jacob the modesty, Mr. Southey the consistency, and the Editor himself the chivalrous spirit and the attacks on Lady Morgan. It is a double crime, and excites a double portion of spleen in the Editor, when female writers are not advocates of passive obedience and non-resistance. This Journal, then, is a depository for every species of political sophistry and personal calumny. There is no abuse or corruption that does not there find a jesuitical palliation or a barefaced vindication. There we meet the slime of hypocrisy, the varnish of courts, the cant of pedantry, the cobwebs of the law, the iron hand of power. Its object is as mischievous as the means by which it is pursued are odious. The intention is to poison the sources of public opinion and of individual fame—to pervert literature, from being the natural ally of freedom and humanity, into an engine of priestcraft and despotism, and to undermine the spirit of the English constitution and the independence of the English character. The Editor and his friends systematically explode every principle of liberty, laugh patriotism and public spirit to scorn, resent every pretence to integrity as a piece of singularity or insolence, and strike at the root of all free inquiry or discussion, by running down every writer as a vile scribbler and a bad member of society, who is not a hireling and a slave. No means are stuck at in accomplishing this laudable end. Strong in patronage, they trample on truth, justice, and decency. They claim the privilege of court-favourites. They keep as little faith with the public, as with their opponents. No statement in the *Quarterly Review* is to be trusted: there is no fact that is not misrepresented in it, no quotation that is not garbled, no character that is not slandered, if it can answer the purposes of a party to do so. The weight of power, of wealth, of rank is thrown into the scale, gives its impulse to the machine; and the whole is under the guidance of Mr. Gifford's instinctive genius—of the in-born hatred of servility for independence, of dulness for talent, of cunning and impudence for truth and honesty. It costs him no effort to execute his disreputable task—in being the tool of a crooked policy, he but labours in his natural vocation. He patches up a rotten system as he would supply the chasms in a worm-eaten manuscript, from a grovelling incapacity to do any thing better; thinks that if a single iota in the claims of prerogative and power were lost, the whole fabric of society would fall upon his head and crush him; and calculates that his best chance for literary reputation is by

black-balling one half of the competitors as Jacobins and levellers, and securing the suffrages of the other half in his favour as a loyal subject and trusty partisan!

Mr. Gifford, as a satirist, is violent and abrupt. He takes obvious or physical defects, and dwells upon them with much labour and harshness of invective, but with very little wit or spirit. He expresses a great deal of anger and contempt, but you cannot tell very well why —except that he seems to be sore and out of humour. His satire is mere peevishness and spleen, or something worse—personal antipathy and rancour. We are in quite as much pain for the writer, as for the object of his resentment. His address to Peter Pindar is laughable from its outrageousness. He denounces him as a wretch hateful to God and man, for some of the most harmless and amusing trifles that ever were written—and the very good-humour and pleasantry of which, we suspect, constituted their offence in the eyes of this Drawcansir.—His attacks on Mrs. Robinson were unmanly, and even those on Mr. Merry and the Della-Cruscan School were much more ferocious than the occasion warranted. A little affectation and quaintness of style did not merit such severity of castigation.[1] As a translator, Mr. Gifford's version of the Roman satirist is the baldest, and, in parts, the most offensive of all others. We do not know why he attempted it, unless he had got it in his head that he should thus follow in the steps of Dryden, as he had already done in those of Pope in the Baviad and Mæviad. As an editor of old authors, Mr. Gifford is entitled to considerable praise for the pains he has taken in revising the text, and for some improvements he has introduced into it. He had better have spared the notes, in which, though he has detected the blunders of previous commentators, he has exposed his own ill-temper and narrowness of feeling more. As a critic, he has thrown no light on the character and spirit of his authors. He has shown no striking power of analysis nor of original illustration, though he has chosen to exercise his pen on writers most congenial to his own turn of mind, from their dry and caustic vein; Massinger, and Ben Jonson. What he will make of Marlowe, it is difficult to guess. He has none of 'the fiery quality' of the poet. Mr. Gifford does not take for his motto on these occasions—*Spiritus precipitandus est!*—His most successful efforts in this way are barely respectable. In general, his observations are petty, ill-concocted, and discover as little *tact*, as they do a habit of connected reasoning. Thus, for instance, in attempting to add the name of Massinger to the list of Catholic poets, our minute critic insists on the profusion of crucifixes,

[1] Mr. Merry was even with our author in personality of abuse. See his Lines on the Story of the Ape that was given in charge to the ex-tutor.

glories, angelic visions, garlands of roses, and clouds of incense scattered through the *Virgin-Martyr*, as evidence of the theological sentiments meant to be inculcated by the play, when the least reflection might have taught him, that they proved nothing but the author's poetical conception of the character and *costume* of his subject. A writer might, with the same sinister, short-sighted shrewdness, be accused of Heathenism for talking of Flora and Ceres in a poem on the Seasons! What are produced as the exclusive badges and occult proofs of Catholic bigotry, are nothing but the adventitious ornaments and external symbols, the gross and sensible language, in a word, the *poetry* of Christianity in general. What indeed shows the frivolousness of the whole inference is that Deckar, who is asserted by our critic to have contributed some of the most passionate and fantastic of these devotional scenes, is not even suspected of a leaning to Popery. In like manner, he excuses Massinger for the grossness of one of his plots (that of the *Unnatural Combat*) by saying that it was supposed to take place before the Christian era; by this shallow common-place persuading himself, or fancying he could persuade others, that the crime in question (which yet on the very face of the story is made the ground of a tragic catastrophe) was first made *statutory* by the Christian religion.

The foregoing is a harsh criticism, and may be thought illiberal. But as Mr. Gifford assumes a right to say what he pleases of others —they may be allowed to speak the truth of him!

MR. JEFFREY

The *Quarterly Review* arose out of the *Edinburgh*, not as a corollary, but in contradiction to it. An article had appeared in the latter on Don Pedro Cevallos, which stung the Tories to the quick by the free way in which it spoke of men and things, and something must be done to check these *escapades* of the *Edinburgh*. It was not to be endured that the truth should *out* in this manner, even occasionally and half in jest. A startling shock was thus given to established prejudices, the mask was taken off from grave hypocrisy, and the most serious consequences were to be apprehended. The persons who wrote in this Review seemed 'to have their hands full of truths,' and now and then, in a fit of spleen or gaiety, let some of them fly; and while this practice continued, it was impossible to say that the Monarchy or the Hierarchy was safe. Some of the arrows glanced, others might stick, and in the end prove fatal. It was not the principles of the *Edinburgh Review*, but the spirit that was looked at

with jealousy and alarm. The principles were by no means decidedly hostile to existing institutions: but the spirit was that of fair and free discussion; a field was open to argument and wit; every question was tried upon its own ostensible merits, and there was no foul play. The tone was that of a studied impartiality (which many called *trimming*) or of a sceptical indifference. This tone of impartiality and indifference, however, did not at all suit those who profited or existed by abuses, who breathed the very air of corruption. They know well enough that 'those who are not *for* them are *against* them.' They wanted a publication impervious alike to truth and candour; that, hood-winked itself, should lead public opinion blindfold; that should stick at nothing to serve the turn of a party; that should be the exclusive organ of prejudice, the sordid tool of power; that should go the whole length of want of principle in palliating every dishonest measure, of want of decency in defaming every honest man; that should prejudge every question, traduce every opponent; that should give no quarter to fair inquiry or liberal sentiment; that should be 'ugly all over with hypocrisy,' and present one foul blotch of servility, intolerance, falsehood, spite, and ill manners. The *Quarterly Review* was accordingly set up.

> 'Sithence no fairy lights, no quickning ray,
> Nor stir of pulse, nor object to entice
> Abroad the spirits; but the cloister'd heart
> Sits squat at home, like Pagod in a niche
> Obscure!'

This event was accordingly hailed (and the omen has been fulfilled!) as a great relief to all those of his Majesty's subjects who are firmly convinced that the only way to have things remain exactly as they are is to put a stop to all inquiries whether they are right or wrong, and that if you cannot answer a man's arguments, you may at least try to take away his character.

We do not implicitly bow to the political opinions, nor to the critical decisions of the *Edinburgh Review*; but we must do justice to the talent with which they are supported, and to the tone of manly explicitness in which they are delivered.[1] They are eminently characteristic of the Spirit of the Age; as it is the express object of the *Quarterly Review* to discountenance and extinguish that spirit, both in theory and practice. The *Edinburgh Review* stands upon the ground of opinion; it asserts the supremacy of intellect: the

[1] The style of philosophical criticism, which has been the boast of the Edinburgh Review, was first introduced into the Monthly Review about the year 1796, in a series of articles by Mr. William Taylor, of Norwich.

pre-eminence it claims is from an acknowledged superiority of talent and information and literary attainment, and it does not build one tittle of its influence on ignorance, or prejudice, or authority, or personal malevolence. It takes up a question, and argues it *pro* and *con* with great knowledge and boldness and skill; it points out an absurdity, and runs it down, fairly, and according to the evidence adduced. In the former case, its conclusions may be wrong, there may be a bias in the mind of the writer, but he states the arguments and circumstances on both sides, from which a judgment is to be formed—it is not his cue, he has neither the effrontery nor the meanness to falsify facts or to suppress objections. In the latter case, or where a vein of sarcasm or irony is resorted to, the ridicule is not barbed by some allusion (false or true) to private history; the object of it has brought the infliction on himself by some literary folly or political delinquency which is referred to as the understood and justifiable provocation, instead of being held up to scorn as a knave for not being a tool, or as a blockhead for thinking for himself. In the *Edinburgh Review* the talents of those on the opposite side are always extolled *pleno ore*—in the *Quarterly Review* they are denied altogether, and the justice that is in this way withheld from them is compensated by a proportionable supply of personal abuse. A man of genius who is a lord, and who publishes with Mr. Murray, may now and then stand as good a chance as a lord who is not a man of genius and who publishes with Messrs. Longman: but that it the utmost extent of the impartiality of the *Quarterly*. From its account you would take Lord Byron and Mr. Stuart Rose for two very pretty poets; but Mr. Moore's Magdalen Muse is sent to Bridewell without mercy, to beat hemp in silk-stockings. In the *Quarterly* nothing is regarded but the political creed or external circumstances of a writer; in the *Edinburgh* nothing is ever adverted to but his literary merits. Or if there is a bias of any kind, it arises from an affectation of magnanimity and candour in giving heaped measure to those on the aristocratic side in politics, and in being critically severe on others. Thus Sir Walter Scott is lauded to the skies for his romantic powers, without any allusion to his political demerits (as if this would be compromising the dignity of genius and of criticism by the introduction of party-spirit)—while Lord Byron is called to a grave moral reckoning. There is, however, little of the cant of morality in the *Edinburgh Review*—and it is quite free from that of religion. It keeps to its province, which is that of criticism—or to the discussion of debateable topics, and acquits itself in both with force and spirit. This is the natural consequence of the composition of the two Reviews. The one

appeals with confidence to its own intellectual resources, to the variety of its topics, to its very character and existence as a literary journal, which depend on its setting up no pretensions but those which it can make good by the talent and ingenuity it can bring to bear upon them—it therefore meets every question, whether of a lighter or a graver cast, on its own grounds; the other *blinks* every question, for it has no confidence but in the *powers that be*—shuts itself up in the impregnable fastnesses of authority, or makes some paltry cowardly attack (under cover of anonymous criticism) on individuals, or dispenses its award of merit entirely according to the rank or party of the writer. The faults of the *Edinburgh Review* arise out of the very consciousness of critical and logical power. In political questions it relies too little on the broad basis of liberty and humanity, enters too much into mere dry formalities, deals too often in *moot-points*, and descends too readily to a sort of special-pleading in defence of *home* truths and natural feelings: in matters of taste and criticism, its tone is sometimes apt to be supercilious and *cavalier* from its habitual faculty of analysing defects and beauties according to given principles, from its quickness in deciding, from its facility in illustrating its views. In this latter department it has been guilty of some capital oversights. The chief was in its treatment of the *Lyrical Ballads* at their first appearance—not in its ridicule of their puerilities, but in its denial of their beauties, because they were included in no school, because they were reducible to no previous standard or theory of poetical excellence. For this, however, considerable reparation has been made by the prompt and liberal spirit that has been shown in bringing forward other examples of poetical genius. Its capital sin, in a doctrinal point of view, has been (we shrewdly suspect) in the uniform and unqualified encouragement it has bestowed on Mr. Malthus's system. We do not mean that the *Edinburgh Review* was to join in the general *hue and cry* that was raised against this writer; but while it asserted the soundness of many of his arguments, and yielded its assent to the truths he has divulged, it need not have screened his errors. On this subject alone we think the *Quarterly* has the advantage of it. But as the *Quarterly Review* is a mere mass and tissue of prejudices on all subjects, it is the foible of the *Edinburgh Review* to affect a somewhat fastidious air of superiority over prejudices of all kinds, and a determination not to indulge in any of the amiable weaknesses of our nature, except as it can give a reason for the faith that is in it. Luckily, it is seldom reduced to this alternative: 'reasons' are with it 'as plenty as blackberries!'

Mr. Jeffrey is the Editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, and is under-

stood to have contributed nearly a fourth part of the articles from its commencement. No man is better qualified for this situation; nor indeed so much so. He is certainly a person in advance of the age, and yet perfectly fitted both from knowledge and habits of mind to put a curb upon its rash and headlong spirit. He is thoroughly acquainted with the progress and pretensions of modern literature and philosophy; and to this he adds the natural acuteness and discrimination of the logician with the habitual caution and coolness of his profession. If the *Edinburgh Review* may be considered as the organ of or at all pledged to a party, that party is at least a respectable one, and is placed in the middle between two extremes. The Editor is bound to lend a patient hearing to the most paradoxical opinions and extravagant theories which have resulted in our times from the 'infinite agitation of wit,' but he is disposed to qualify them by a number of practical objections, of speculative doubts, of checks and drawbacks, arising out of actual circumstances and prevailing opinions, or the frailties of human nature. He has a great range of knowledge, an incessant activity of mind; but the suspension of his judgment, the well-balanced moderation of his sentiments, is the consequence of the very discursiveness of his reason. What may be considered as a *common-place* conclusion is often the result of a comprehensive view of all the circumstances of a case. Paradox, violence, nay even originality of conception is not seldom owing to our dwelling long and pertinaciously on some one part of a subject, instead of attending to the whole. Mr. Jeffrey is neither a bigot nor an enthusiast. He is not the dupe of the prejudices of others, nor of his own. He is not wedded to any dogma, he is not long the sport of any whim; before he can settle in any fond or fantastic opinion, another starts up to match it, like beads on sparkling wine. A too restless display of talent, a too undisguised statement of all that can be said for and against a question, is perhaps the great fault that is to be attributed to him. Where there is so much power and prejudice to contend with in the opposite scale, it may be thought that the balance of truth can hardly be held with a slack or an even hand; and that the infusion of a little more visionary speculation, of a little more popular indignation into the great Whig Review would be an advantage both to itself and to the cause of freedom. Much of this effect is chargeable less on an Epicurean levity of feeling or on party-trammels, than on real sanguineness of disposition, and a certain fineness of professional tact. Our sprightly Scotchman is not of a desponding and gloomy turn of mind. He argues well for the future hopes of mankind from the smallest beginnings, watches the slow,

gradual, reluctant growth of liberal views, and smiling sees the aloe of Reform blossom at the end of a hundred years; while the habitual subtlety of his mind makes him perceive decided advantages where vulgar ignorance or passion sees only doubts and difficulty; and a flaw in an adversary's argument stands him instead of the shout of a mob, the votes of a majority, or the fate of a pitched battle. The Editor is satisfied with his own conclusions, and does not make himself uneasy about the fate of mankind. The issue, he thinks, will verify his moderate and well-founded expectations.—We believe also that late events have given a more decided turn to Mr. Jeffrey's mind, and that he feels that as in the struggle between liberty and slavery, the views of the one party have been laid bare with their success, so the exertions on the other side should become more strenuous, and a more positive stand be made against the avowed and appalling encroachments of priestcraft and arbitrary power.

The characteristics of Mr. Jeffrey's general style as a writer correspond, we think, with what we have here stated as the characteristics of his mind. He is a master of the foils; he makes an exulting display of the dazzling fence of wit and argument. His strength consists in great range of knowledge, an equal familiarity with the principles and the details of a subject, and in a glancing brilliancy and rapidity of style. Indeed, we doubt whether the brilliancy of his manner does not resolve itself into the rapidity, the variety and aptness of his illustrations. His pen is never at a loss, never stands still; and would dazzle for this reason alone, like an eye that is ever in motion. Mr. Jeffrey is far from a flowery or affected writer; he has few tropes or figures, still less any odd startling thoughts or quaint innovations in expression:—but he has a constant supply of ingenious solutions and pertinent examples; he never proses, never grows dull, never wears an argument to tatters; and by the number, the liveliness and facility of his transitions, keeps up that appearance of vivacity, of novel and sparkling effect, for which others are too often indebted to singularity of combination or tinsel ornaments.

It may be discovered, by a nice observer, that Mr. Jeffrey's style of composition is that of a person accustomed to public speaking. There is no pause, no meagreness, no inanimateness, but a flow, a redundance and volubility like that of a stream or of a rolling-stone. The language is more copious than select, and sometimes two or three words perform the office of one. This copiousness and facility is perhaps an advantage in *extempore* speaking, where no stop or break is allowed in the discourse, and where any word or any number of words almost is better than coming to a dead stand; but in written

compositions it gives an air of either too much carelessness or too much labour. Mr. Jeffrey's excellence, as a public speaker, has betrayed him into this peculiarity. He makes fewer *blots* in addressing an audience than any one we remember to have heard. There is not a hair's-breadth space between any two of his words, nor is there a single expression either ill-chosen or out of its place. He speaks without stopping to take breath, with ease, with point, with elegance, and without 'spinning the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument.' He may be said to weave words into any shapes he pleases for use or ornament, as the glass-blower moulds the vitreous fluid with his breath; and his sentences shine like glass from their polished smoothness, and are equally transparent. His style of eloquence, indeed, is remarkable for neatness, for correctness, and epigrammatic point; and he has applied this as a standard to his written compositions, where the very same degree of correctness and precision produces, from the contrast between writing and speaking, an agreeable diffuseness, freedom and animation. Whenever the Scotch advocate has appeared at the bar of the English House of Lords, he has been admired by those who were in the habit of attending to speeches there, as having the greatest fluency of language and the greatest subtlety of distinction of any one of the profession. The law-reporters were as little able to follow him from the extreme rapidity of his utterance as from the tenuity and evanescent nature of his reasoning.

Mr. Jeffrey's conversation is equally lively, various, and instructive. There is no subject on which he is not *au fait*: no company in which he is not ready to scatter his pearls for sport. Whether it be politics, or poetry, or science, or anecdote, or wit, or raillery, he takes up his cue without effort, without preparation, and appears equally incapable of tiring himself or his hearers. His only difficulty seems to be, not to speak, but to be silent. There is a constitutional buoyancy and elasticity of mind about him that cannot subside into repose, much less sink into dulness. There may be more original talkers, persons who occasionally surprise or interest you more; few, if any, with a more uninterrupted flow of cheerfulness and animal spirits, with a greater fund of information, and with fewer specimens of the *bathos* in their conversation. He is never absurd, nor has he any favourite points which he is always bringing forward. It cannot be denied that there is something bordering on petulance of manner, but it is of that least offensive kind which may be accounted for from merit and from success, and implies no exclusive pretensions nor the least particle of ill-will to others. On the contrary, Mr. Jeffrey is profuse of his encomiums and admiration of others, but still with a

certain reservation of a right to differ or to blame. He cannot rest on one side of a question: he is obliged by a mercurial habit and disposition to vary his point of view. If he is ever tedious, it is from an excess of liveliness: he oppresses from a sense of airy lightness. He is always setting out on a fresh scent: there are always *relays* of topics; the harness is put to, and he rattles away as delightfully and as briskly as ever. New causes are called; he holds a brief in his hand for every possible question. This is a fault. Mr. Jeffrey is not obtrusive, is not impatient of opposition, is not unwilling to be interrupted; but what is said by another, seems to make no impression on him; he is bound to dispute, to answer it, as if he was in Court, or as if it were in a paltry Debating Society, where young beginners were trying their hands. This is not to maintain a character, or for want of good-nature—it is a thoughtless habit. He cannot help cross-examining a witness, or stating the adverse view of the question. He listens not to judge, but to reply. In consequence of this, you can as little tell the impression your observations make on him as what weight to assign to his. Mr. Jeffrey shines in mixed company; he is not good in a *tête-à-tête*. You can only show your wisdom or your wit in general society: but in private your follies or your weaknesses are not the least interesting topics; and our critic has neither any of his own to confess, nor does he take delight in hearing those of others. Indeed in Scotland generally, the display of personal character, the indulging your whims and humours in the presence of a friend, is not much encouraged—every one there is looked upon in the light of a machine or a collection of topics. They turn you round like a cylinder to see what use they can make of you, and drag you into a dispute with as little ceremony as they would drag out an article from an Encyclopedia. They criticise every thing, analyse every thing, argue upon every thing, dogmatise upon every thing; and the bundle of your habits, feelings, humours, follies and pursuits is regarded by them no more than a bundle of old clothes. They stop you in a sentiment by a question or a stare, and cut you short in a narrative by the time of night. The accomplished and ingenious person of whom we speak, has been a little infected by the tone of his countrymen—he is too didactic, too pugnacious, too full of electrical shocks, too much like a voltaic battery, and reposes too little on his own excellent good sense, his own love of ease, his cordial frankness of temper and unaffected candour. He ought to have belonged to us!

The severest of critics (as he has been sometimes termed) is the best-natured of men. Whatever there may be of wavering or indecision in Mr. Jeffrey's reasoning, or of harshness in his critical

decisions, in his disposition there is nothing but simplicity and kindness. He is a person that no one knows without esteeming, and who both in his public connections and private friendships, shows the same manly uprightness and unbiassed independence of spirit. At a distance, in his writings, or even in his manner, there may be something to excite a little uneasiness and apprehension: in his conduct there is nothing to except against. He is a person of strict integrity himself, without pretence or affectation; and knows how to respect this quality in others, without prudery or intolerance. He can censure a friend or a stranger, and serve him effectually at the same time. He expresses his disapprobation, but not as an excuse for closing up the avenues of his liberality. He is a Scotchman without one particle of hypocrisy, of cant, of servility, or selfishness in his composition. He has not been spoiled by fortune—has not been tempted by power—is firm without violence, friendly without weakness—a critic and even-tempered, a casuist and an honest man—and amidst the toils of his profession and the distractions of the world, retains the gaiety, the unpretending carelessness and simplicity of youth. Mr. Jeffrey in his person is slight, with a countenance of much expression, and a voice of great flexibility and acuteness of tone.

MR. BROUGHAM—SIR F. BURDETT

There is a class of eloquence which has been described and particularly insisted on, under the style and title of *Irish Eloquence*: there is another class which it is not absolutely unfair to oppose to this, and that is the Scotch. The first of these is entirely the offspring of *impulse*: the last of *mechanism*. The one is as full of fancy as it is bare of facts: the other excludes all fancy, and is weighed down with facts. The one is all fire, the other all ice: the one nothing but enthusiasm, extravagance, eccentricity; the other nothing but logical deductions, and the most approved postulates. The one without scruple, nay, with reckless zeal, throws the reins loose on the neck of the imagination: the other pulls up with a curb-bridle, and starts at every casual object it meets in the way as a bug-bear. The genius of Irish oratory stands forth in the naked majesty of untutored nature, its eye glancing wildly round on all objects, its tongue darting forked fire: the genius of Scottish eloquence is armed in all the panoply of the schools; its drawling, ambiguous dialect seconds its circumspect dialectics; from behind the vizor that guards its mouth and shadows its pent-up brows, it sees no visions but its own set purpose, its own

data, and its own dogmas. It 'has no figures, nor no fantasies,' but 'those which busy care draws in the brains of men,' or which set off its own superior acquirements and wisdom. It scorns to 'tread the primrose path of dalliance'—it shrinks back from it as from a precipice, and keeps in the iron rail-way of the understanding. Irish oratory, on the contrary, is a sort of aëronaut: it is always going up in a balloon, and breaking its neck, or coming down in the parachute. It is filled full with gaseous matter, with whim and fancy, with alliteration and antithesis, with heated passion and bloated metaphors, that burst the slender silken covering of sense; and the airy pageant, that glittered in empty space and rose in all the bliss of ignorance, flutters and sinks down to its native bogs! If the Irish orator riots in a studied neglect of his subject and a natural confusion of ideas, playing with words, ranging them into all sorts of fantastic combinations, because in the unlettered void or chaos of his mind there is no obstacle to their coalescing into any shapes they please, it must be confessed that the eloquence of the Scotch is encumbered with an excess of knowledge, that it cannot get on for a crowd of difficulties, that it staggers under a load of topics, that it is so environed in the forms of logic and rhetoric as to be equally precluded from originality or absurdity, from beauty or deformity:—the plea of humanity is lost by going through the process of law, the firm and manly tone of principle is exchanged for the wavering and pitiful cant of policy, the living bursts of passion are reduced to a defunct *common-place*, and all true imagination is buried under the dust and rubbish of learned models and imposing authorities. If the one is a bodiless phantom, the other is a lifeless skeleton: if the one in its feverish and hectic extravagance resembles a sick man's dream, the other is akin to the sleep of death—cold, stiff, unfeeling, monumental! Upon the whole, we despair less of the first than of the last, for the principle of life and motion is, after all, the primary condition of all genius. The luxuriant wildness of the one may be disciplined, and its excesses sobered down into reason; but the dry and rigid formality of the other can never burst the shell or husk of oratory. It is true that the one is disfigured by the puerilities and affectation of a Phillips; but then it is redeemed by the manly sense and fervour of a Plunket, the impassioned appeals and flashes of wit of a Curran, and by the golden tide of wisdom, eloquence, and fancy, that flowed from the lips of a Burke. In the other, we do not sink so low in the negative series; but we get no higher in the ascending scale than a Mackintosh or a Brougham.[1] It may be suggested that the late Lord Erskine

[1] Mr. Brougham is not a Scotchman literally, but by adoption.

enjoyed a higher reputation as an orator than either of these: but he owed it to a dashing and graceful manner, to presence of mind, and to great animation in delivering his sentiments. Stripped of these outward and personal advantages, the matter of his speeches, like that of his writings, is nothing, or perfectly inert and dead.

Mr. Brougham is from the North of England, but he was educated in Edinburgh, and represents that school of politics and political economy in the House. He differs from Sir James Mackintosh in this, that he deals less in abstract principles, and more in individual details. He makes less use of general topics, and more of immediate facts. Sir James is better acquainted with the balance of an argument in old authors; Mr. Brougham with the balance of power in Europe. If the first is better versed in the progress of history, no man excels the last in a knowledge of the course of exchange. He is apprised of the exact state of our exports and imports, and scarce a ship clears out its cargo at Liverpool or Hull, but he has notice of the bill of lading. Our colonial policy, prison-discipline, the state of the Hulks, agricultural distress, commerce and manufactures, the Bullion question, the Catholic question, the Bourbons or the Inquisition, 'domestic treason, foreign levy,' nothing can come amiss to him—he is at home in the crooked mazes of rotten boroughs, is not baffled by Scotch law, and can follow the meaning of one of Mr. Canning's speeches. With so many resources, with such variety and solidity of information, Mr. Brougham is rather a powerful and alarming, than an effectual debater. In so many details (which he himself goes through with unwearied and unshrinking resolution) the spirit of the question is lost to others who have not the same voluntary power of attention or the same interest in hearing that he has in speaking; the original impulse that urged him forward is forgotten in so wide a field, in so interminable a career. If he can, others *cannot* carry all he knows in their heads at the same time; a rope of circumstantial evidence does not hold well together, nor drag the unwilling mind along with it (the willing mind hurries on before it, and grows impatient and absent)—he moves in an unmanageable procession of facts and proofs, instead of coming to the point at once—and his premises (so anxious is he to proceed on sure and ample grounds) overlay and block up his conclusion, so that you cannot arrive at it, or not till the first fury and shock of the onset is over. The ball, from the too great width of the *calibre* from which it is sent, and from striking against such a number of hard, projecting points, is almost spent before it reaches its destination. He keeps a ledger or a debtor-and-creditor account between the Government and the Country, posts so much actual crime, corruption, and injustice

against so much contingent advantage or sluggish prejudice, and at the bottom of the page brings in the balance of indignation and contempt, where it is due. But people are not to be *calculated into* contempt or indignation on abstract grounds; for however they may submit to this process where their own interests are concerned, in what regards the public good we believe they must see and feel instinctively, or not at all. There is (it is to be lamented) a good deal of froth as well as strength in the popular spirit, which will not admit of being *decanted* or served out in formal driblets; nor will spleen (the soul of Opposition) bear to be corked up in square patent bottles, and kept for future use! In a word, Mr. Brougham's is ticketed and labelled eloquence, registered and in numeros (like the successive parts of a Scotch Encyclopedia)—it is clever, knowing, imposing, masterly, an extraordinary display of clearness of head, of quickness and energy of thought, of application and industry; but it is not the eloquence of the imagination or the heart, and will never save a nation or an individual from perdition.

Mr. Brougham has one considerable advantage in debate: he is overcome by no false modesty, no deference to others. But then, by a natural consequence or parity of reasoning, he has little sympathy with other people, and is liable to be mistaken in the effect his arguments will have upon them. He relies too much, among other things, on the patience of his hearers, and on his ability to turn every thing to his own advantage. He accordingly goes to the full length of *his tether* (in vulgar phrase) and often overshoots the mark. *C'est dommage.* He has no reserve of discretion, no retentiveness of mind or check upon himself. He needs, with so much wit,

'As much again to govern it.'

He cannot keep a good thing or a shrewd piece of information in his possession, though the letting it out should mar a cause. It is not that he thinks too much of himself, too little of his cause: but he is absorbed in the pursuit of truth as an abstract inquiry, he is led away by the headstrong and overmastering activity of his own mind. He is borne along, almost involuntarily, and not impossibly against his better judgment, by the throng and restlessness of his ideas as by a crowd of people in motion. His perceptions are literal, tenacious, *epileptic* — his understanding voracious of facts, and equally communicative of them—and he proceeds to

'——— Pour out all as plain
As downright Shippen or as old Montaigne'—

without either the virulence of the one or the *bonhommie* of the other.

The repeated, smart, unforeseen discharges of the truth jar those that are next him. He does not dislike this state of irritation and collision, indulges his curiosity or his triumph, till by calling for more facts or hazarding some extreme inference, he urges a question to the verge of a precipice, his adversaries urge it *over*, and he himself shrinks back from the consequence—

'Scared at the sound himself has made!'

Mr. Brougham has great fearlessness, but not equal firmness; and after going too far on the *forlorn hope*, turns short round without due warning to others or respect for himself. He is adventurous, but easily panic-struck; and sacrifices the vanity of self-opinion to the necessity of self-preservation. He is too improvident for a leader, too petulant for a partisan; and does not sufficiently consult those with whom he is supposed to act in concert. He sometimes leaves them in the lurch, and is sometimes left in the lurch by them. He wants the principle of co-operation. He frequently, in a fit of thoughtless levity, gives an unexpected turn to the political machine, which alarms older and more experienced heads: if he was not himself the first to get out of harm's way and escape from the danger, it would be well!—We hold, indeed, as a general rule, that no man born or bred in Scotland can be a great orator, unless he is a mere quack; or a great statesman, unless he turns plain knave. The national gravity is against the first: the national caution is against the last. To a Scotchman if a thing *is*, *it is*; there is an end of the question with his opinion about it. He is positive and abrupt, and is not in the habit of conciliating the feelings or soothing the follies of others. His only way therefore to produce a popular effect is to sail with the stream of prejudice, and to vent common dogmas, 'the total grist, unsifted, husks and all,' from some evangelical pulpit. This may answer, and it has answered. On the other hand, if a Scotchman, born or bred, comes to think at all of the feelings of others, it is not as they regard them, but as their opinion reacts on his own interest and safety. He is therefore either pragmatical and offensive, or if he tries to please, he becomes cowardly and fawning. His public spirit wants pliancy; his selfish compliances go all lengths. He is as impracticable as a popular partisan, as he is mischievous as a tool of Government. We do not wish to press this argument farther, and must leave it involved in some degree of obscurity, rather than bring the armed intellect of a whole nation on our heads.

Mr. Brougham speaks in a loud and unmitigated tone of voice, sometimes almost approaching to a scream. He is fluent, rapid, vehement, full of his subject, with evidently a great deal to say, and

very regardless of the manner of saying it. As a lawyer, he has not hitherto been remarkably successful. He is not profound in cases and reports, nor does he take much interest in the peculiar features of a particular cause, or show much adroitness in the management of it. He carries too much weight of metal for ordinary and petty occasions: he must have a pretty large question to discuss, and must make *thorough-stitch* work of it. He, however, had an encounter with Mr. Phillips the other day, and shook all his tender blossoms, so that they fell to the ground, and withered in an hour; but they soon bloomed again! Mr. Brougham writes almost, if not quite, as well as he speaks. In the midst of an Election contest he comes out to address the populace, and goes back to his study to finish an article for the Edinburgh Review; sometimes indeed wedging three or four articles (in the shape of *refaccimentos* of his own pamphlets or speeches in parliament) into a single number. Such indeed is the activity of his mind that it appears to require neither repose, nor any other stimulus than a delight in its own exercise. He can turn his hand to any thing, but he cannot be idle. There are few intellectual accomplishments which he does not possess, and possess in a very high degree. He speaks French (and, we believe, several other modern languages) fluently: is a capital mathematician, and obtained an introduction to the celebrated Carnot in this latter character, when the conversation turned on squaring the circle, and not on the propriety of confining France within the natural boundary of the Rhine. Mr. Brougham is, in fact, a striking instance of the versatility and strength of the human mind, and also in one sense of the length of human life, if we make a good use of our time. There is room enough to crowd almost every art and science into it. If we pass 'no day without a line,' visit no place without the company of a book, we may with ease fill libraries or empty them of their contents. Those who complain of the shortness of life, let it slide by them without wishing to seize and make the most of its golden minutes. The more we do, the more we can do; the more busy we are, the more leisure we have. If any one possesses any advantage in a considerable degree, he may make himself master of nearly as many more as he pleases, by employing his spare time and cultivating the waste faculties of his mind. While one person is determining on the choice of a profession or study, another shall have made a fortune or gained a merited reputation. While one person is dreaming over the meaning of a word, another will have learnt several languages. It is not incapacity, but indolence, indecision, want of imagination, and a proneness to a sort of mental tautology, to repeat the same images and tread the same circle, that

leaves us so poor, so dull, and inert as we are, so naked of acquirement, so barren of resources! While we are walking backwards and forwards between Charing-Cross and Temple-Bar, and sitting in the same coffee-house every day, we might make the grand tour of Europe, and visit the Vatican and the Louvre. Mr. Brougham, among other means of strengthening and enlarging his views, has visited, we believe, most of the courts, and turned his attention to most of the Constitutions of the continent. He is, no doubt, a very accomplished, active-minded, and admirable person.

Sir Francis Burdett, in many respects, affords a contrast to the foregoing character. He is a plain, unaffected, unsophisticated English gentleman. He is a person of great reading too and considerable information, but he makes very little display of these, unless it be to quote Shakespear, which he does often with extreme aptness and felicity. Sir Francis is one of the most pleasing speakers in the House, and is a prodigious favourite of the English people. So he ought to be: for he is one of the few remaining examples of the old English understanding and old English character. All that he pretends to is common sense and common honesty; and a greater compliment cannot be paid to these than the attention with which he is listened to in the House of Commons. We cannot conceive a higher proof of courage than the saying things which he has been known to say there; and we have seen him blush and appear ashamed of the truths he has been obliged to utter, like a bashful novice. He could not have uttered what he often did there, if, besides his general respectability, he had not been a very honest, a very good-tempered, and a very good-looking man. But there was evidently no wish to shine, nor any desire to offend: it was painful to him to hurt the feelings of those who heard him, but it was a higher duty in him not to suppress his sincere and earnest convictions. It is wonderful how much virtue and plain-dealing a man may be guilty of with impunity, if he has no vanity, or ill-nature, or duplicity to provoke the contempt or resentment of others, and to make them impatient of the superiority he sets up over them. We do not recollect that Sir Francis ever endeavoured to atone for any occasional indiscretions or intemperance by giving the Duke of York credit for the battle of Waterloo, or congratulating Ministers on the confinement of Buonaparte at St. Helena. There is no honest cause which he dares not avow: no oppressed individual that he is not forward to succour. He has the firmness of manhood with the unimpaired enthusiasm of youthful feeling about him. His principles are mellowed and improved, without having become less sound with time: for at one period he sometimes appeared to come charged to

the House with the petulance and caustic sententiousness he had imbibed at Wimbledon Common. He is never violent or in extremes, except when the people or the parliament happen to be out of their senses; and then he seems to regret the necessity of plainly telling them he thinks so, instead of pluming himself upon it or exulting over impending calamities. There is only one error he seems to labour under (which, we believe, he also borrowed from Mr. Horne Tooke or Major Cartwright), the wanting to go back to the early times of our Constitution and history in search of the principles of law and liberty. He might as well

'Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.'

Liberty, in our opinion, is but a modern invention (the growth of books and printing)—and whether new or old, is not the less desirable. A man may be a patriot, without being an antiquary. This is the only point on which Sir Francis is at all inclined to a tincture of pedantry. In general, his love of liberty is pure, as it is warm and steady: his humanity is unconstrained and free. His heart does not ask leave of his head to feel; nor does prudence always keep a guard upon his tongue or his pen. No man writes a better letter to his Constituents than the Member for Westminster; and his compositions of that kind ought to be good, for they have occasionally cost him dear. He is the idol of the people of Westminster: few persons have a greater number of friends and well-wishers; and he has still greater reason to be proud of his enemies, for his integrity and independence have made them so. Sir Francis Burdett has often been left in a Minority in the House of Commons, with only one or two on his side. We suspect, unfortunately for his country, that History will be found to enter its protest on the same side of the question!

LORD ELDON AND MR. WILBERFORCE

Lord Eldon is an exceedingly good-natured man; but this does not prevent him, like other good-natured people, from consulting his own ease or interest. The character of *good-nature*, as it is called, has been a good deal mistaken; and the present Chancellor is not a bad illustration of the grounds of the prevailing error. When we happen to see an individual whose countenance is 'all tranquillity and smiles;' who is full of good-humour and pleasantry; whose manners are gentle and conciliating; who is uniformly temperate in his

expressions, and punctual and just in his every-day dealings; we are apt to conclude from so fair an outside, that

'All is conscience and tender heart

within also, and that such a one would not hurt a fly. And neither would he without a motive. But mere good-nature (or what passes in the world for such) is often no better than indolent selfishness. A person distinguished and praised for this quality will not needlessly offend others, because they may retaliate; and besides, it ruffles his own temper. He likes to enjoy a perfect calm, and to live in an interchange of kind offices. He suffers few things to irritate or annoy him. He has a fine oiliness in his disposition, which smooths the waves of passion as they rise. He does not enter into the quarrels or enmities of others; bears their calamities with patience; he listens to the din and clang of war, the earthquake and the hurricane of the political and moral world with the temper and spirit of a philosopher; no act of injustice puts him beside himself, the follies and absurdities of mankind never give him a moment's uneasiness, he has none of the ordinary causes of fretfulness or chagrin that torment others from the undue interest they take in the conduct of their neighbours or in the public good. None of these idle or frivolous sources of discontent, that make such havoc with the peace of human life, ever discompose his features or alter the serenity of his pulse. If a nation is robbed of its rights,

'If wretches hang that Ministers may dine,'—

the laughing jest still collects in his eye, the cordial squeeze of the hand is still the same. But tread on the toe of one of these amiable and imperturbable mortals, or let a lump of soot fall down the chimney and spoil their dinners, and see how they will bear it. All their patience is confined to the accidents that befal others: all their good-humour is to be resolved into giving themselves no concern about any thing but their own ease and self-indulgence. Their charity begins and ends at home. Their being free from the common infirmities of temper is owing to their indifference to the common feelings of humanity; and if you touch the sore place, they betray more resentment, and break out (like spoiled children) into greater fractiousness than others, partly from a greater degree of selfishness, and partly because they are taken by surprise, and mad to think they have not guarded every point against annoyance or attack, by a habit of callous insensibility and pampered indolence.

An instance of what we mean occurred but the other day. An allusion was made in the House of Commons to something in the proceedings in the Court of Chancery, and the Lord Chancellor

comes to his place in the Court, with the statement in his hand, fire in his eyes, and a direct charge of falsehood in his mouth, without knowing any thing certain of the matter, without making any inquiry into it, without using any precaution or putting the least restraint upon himself, and all on no better authority than a common newspaper report. The thing was (not that we are imputing any strong blame in this case, we merely bring it as an illustration) it touched himself, his office, the inviolability of his jurisdiction, the unexceptionableness of his proceedings, and the wet blanket of the Chancellor's temper instantly took fire like tinder! All the fine balancing was at an end; all the doubts, all the delicacy, all the candour real or affected, all the chances that there might be a mistake in the report, all the decencies to be observed towards a Member of the House, are overlooked by the blindness of passion, and the wary Judge pounces upon the paragraph without mercy, without a moment's delay, or the smallest attention to forms! This was indeed serious business, there was to be no trifling here; every instant was an age till the Chancellor had discharged his sense of indignation on the head of the indiscreet interloper on his authority. Had it been another person's case, another person's dignity that had been compromised, another person's conduct that had been called in question, who doubts but that the matter might have stood over till the next term, that the Noble Lord would have taken the Newspaper home in his pocket, that he would have compared it carefully with other newspapers, that he would have written in the most mild and gentlemanly terms to the Honourable Member to inquire into the truth of the statement, that he would have watched a convenient opportunity good-humouredly to ask other Honourable Members what all this was about, that the greatest caution and fairness would have been observed, and that to this hour the lawyers' clerks and the junior counsel would have been in the greatest admiration of the Chancellor's nicety of discrimination, and the utter inefficacy of the heats, importunities, haste, and passions of others to influence his judgment? This would have been true; yet his readiness to decide and to condemn where he himself is concerned, shows that passion is not dead in him, nor subject to the control of reason; but that self-love is the mainspring that moves it, though on all beyond that limit he looks with the most perfect calmness and philosophic indifference.

> 'Resistless passion sways us to the mood
> Of what it likes or loaths.'

All people are passionate in what concerns themselves, or in what they take an interest in. The range of this last is different in different

persons; but the want of passion is but another name for the want of sympathy and imagination.

The Lord Chancellor's impartiality and conscientious exactness are proverbial; and is, we believe, as inflexible as it is delicate in all cases that occur in the stated routine of legal practice. The impatience, the irritation, the hopes, the fears, the confident tone of the applicants move him not a jot from his intended course, he looks at their claims with the 'lack lustre eye' of professional indifference. Power and influence apart, his next strongest passion is to indulge in the exercise of professional learning and skill, to amuse himself with the dry details and intricate windings of the law of equity. He delights to balance a straw, to see a feather turn the scale, or make it even again; and divides and subdivides a scruple to the smallest fraction. He unravels the web of argument and pieces it together again; folds it up and lays it aside, that he may examine it more at his leisure. He hugs indecision to his breast, and takes home a modest doubt or a nice point to solace himself with it in protracted, luxurious dalliance. Delay seems, in his mind, to be of the very essence of justice. He no more hurries through a question than if no one was waiting for the result, and he was merely a *dilettanti*, fanciful judge, who played at my Lord Chancellor, and busied himself with quibbles and punctilios as an idle hobby and harmless illusion. The phlegm of the Chancellor's disposition gives one almost a surfeit of impartiality and candour: we are sick of the eternal poise of childish dilatoriness; and would wish law and justice to be decided at once by a cast of the dice (as they were in Rabelais) rather than be kept in frivolous and tormenting suspense. But there is a limit even to this extreme refinement and scrupulousness of the Chancellor. The understanding acts only in the absence of the passions. At the approach of the loadstone, the needle trembles, and points to it. The air of a political question has a wonderful tendency to brace and quicken the learned Lord's faculties. The breath of a court speedily oversets a thousand objections, and scatters the cobwebs of his brain. The secret wish of power is a thumping *make-weight*, where all is so nicely balanced beforehand. In the case of a celebrated beauty and heiress, and the brother of a Noble Lord, the Chancellor hesitated long, and went through the forms, as usual: but who ever doubted, where all this indecision would end? No man in his senses, for a single instant! We shall not press this point, which is rather a ticklish one. Some persons thought that from entertaining a fellow-feeling on the subject, the Chancellor would have been ready to favour the Poet-Laureat's application to the Court of Chancery for an injunction against Wat

Tyler. His Lordship's sentiments on such points are not so variable, he has too much at stake. He recollected the year 1794, though Mr. Southey had forgotten it!—

The personal always prevails over the intellectual, where the latter is not backed by strong feeling and principle. Where remote and speculative objects do not excite a predominant interest and passion, gross and immediate ones are sure to carry the day, even in ingenuous and well-disposed minds. The will yields necessarily to some motive or other; and where the public good or distant consequences excite no sympathy in the breast, either from short-sightedness or an easiness of temperament that shrinks from any violent effort or painful emotion, self-interest, indolence, the opinion of others, a desire to please, the sense of personal obligation, come in and fill up the void of public spirit, patriotism, and humanity. The best men in the world in their own natural dispositions or in private life (for this reason) often become the most dangerous public characters, from their pliancy to the unruly passions of others, and from their having no set-off in strong moral *stamina* to the temptations that are held out to them, if, as is frequently the case, they are men of versatile talent or patient industry.—Lord Eldon has one of the best-natured faces in the world; it is pleasant to meet him in the street, plodding along with an umbrella under his arm, without one trace of pride, of spleen, or discontent in his whole demeanour, void of offence, with almost rustic simplicity and honesty of appearance—a man that makes friends at first sight, and could hardly make enemies, if he would; and whose only fault is that he cannot say *Nay* to power, or subject himself to an unkind word or look from a King or a Minister. He is a thorough-bred Tory. Others boggle or are at fault in their career, or give back at a pinch, they split into different factions, have various objects to distract them, their private friendships or antipathies stand in their way; but he has never flinched, never gone back, never missed his way, he is an *out-and-outer* in this respect, his allegiance has been without flaw, like 'one entire and perfect chrysolite,' his implicit understanding is a kind of taffeta-lining to the Crown, his servility has assumed an air of the most determined independence, and he has

'Read his history in a Prince's eyes!'—

There has been no stretch of power attempted in his time that he has not seconded: no existing abuse, so odious or so absurd, that he has not sanctioned it. He has gone the whole length of the most unpopular designs of Ministers. When the heavy artillery of interest, power, and prejudice is brought into the field, the paper pellets of the

brain go for nothing: his labyrinth of nice, lady-like doubts explodes like a mine of gunpowder. The Chancellor may weigh and palter—the courtier is decided, the politician is firm, and rivetted to his place in the Cabinet! On all the great questions that have divided party opinion or agitated the public mind, the Chancellor has been found uniformly and without a single exception on the side of prerogative and power, and against every proposal for the advancement of freedom. He was a strenuous supporter of the wars and coalitions against the principles of liberty abroad; he has been equally zealous in urging or defending every act and infringement of the Constitution, for abridging it at home: he at the same time opposes every amelioration of the penal laws, on the alleged ground of his abhorrence of even the shadow of innovation: he has studiously set his face against Catholic emancipation; he laboured hard in his vocation to prevent the abolition of the Slave Trade; he was Attorney-General in the trials for High Treason in 1794; and the other day in giving his opinion on the Queen's Trial, shed tears and protested his innocence before God! This was natural and to be expected; but on all occasions he is to be found at his post, true to the call of prejudice, of power, to the will of others and to his own interest. In the whole of his public career, and with all the goodness of his disposition, he has not shown 'so small a drop of pity as a wren's eye.' He seems to be on his guard against every thing liberal and humane as his weak side. Others relax in their obsequiousness either from satiety or disgust, or a hankering after popularity, or a wish to be thought above narrow prejudices. The Lord Chancellor alone is fixed and immovable. Is it want of understanding or of principle? No—it is want of imagination, a phlegmatic habit, an excess of false complaisance and good-nature. He signs a warrant in Council, devoting ten thousand men to an untimely death, with steady nerves—Is it that he is cruel and unfeeling? No!—but he thinks neither of their sufferings nor their cries; he sees only the gracious smile, the ready hand stretched out to thank him for his compliance with the dictates of rooted hate. He dooms a Continent to slavery. Is it that he is a tyrant, or an enemy to the human race? No!—but he cannot find in his heart to resist the commands or to give pain to a kind and generous benefactor. Common sense and justice are little better than vague terms to him: he acts upon his immediate feelings and least irksome impulses. The King's hand is velvet to the touch—the Woolsack is a seat of honour and profit! That is all he knows about the matter. As to abstract metaphysical calculations, the ox that stands staring at the corner of the street troubles his head as much about them as he does: yet this last is a very good sort of animal

with no harm or malice in him, unless he is goaded on to mischief, and then it is necessary to keep out of his way, or warn others against him!

Mr. Wilberforce is a less perfect character in his way. He acts from mixed motives. He would willingly serve two masters, God and Mammon. He is a person of many excellent and admirable qualifications, but he has made a mistake in wishing to reconcile those that are incompatible. He has a most winning eloquence, specious, persuasive, familiar, silver-tongued, is amiable, charitable, conscientious, pious, loyal, humane, tractable to power, accessible to popularity, honouring the king, and no less charmed with the homage of his fellow-citizens. 'What lacks he then?' Nothing but an economy of good parts. By aiming at too much, he has spoiled all, and neutralised what might have been an estimable character, distinguished by signal services to mankind. A man must take his choice not only between virtue and vice, but between different virtues. Otherwise, he will not gain his own approbation, or secure the respect of others. The graces and accomplishments of private life mar the man of business and the statesman. There is a severity, a sternness, a self-denial, and a painful sense of duty required in the one, which ill-befits the softness and sweetness which should characterise the other. Loyalty, patriotism, friendship, humanity, are all virtues; but may they not sometimes clash? By being unwilling to forego the praise due to any, we may forfeit the reputation of all; and, instead of uniting the suffrages of the whole world in our favour, we may end in becoming a sort of by-word for affectation, cant, hollow professions, trimming, fickleness, and effeminate imbecility. It is best to choose and act up to some one leading character, as it is best to have some settled profession or regular pursuit in life.

We can readily believe that Mr. Wilberforce's first object and principle of action is to do what he thinks right: his next (and that we fear is of almost equal weight with the first) is to do what will be thought so by other people. He is always at a game of *hawk and buzzard* between these two: his 'conscience will not budge,' unless the world goes with it. He does not seem greatly to dread the denunciation in Scripture, but rather to court it—'Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!' We suspect he is not quite easy in his mind, because West-India planters and Guinea traders do not join in his praise. His ears are not strongly enough tuned to drink in the execrations of the spoiler and the oppressor as the sweetest music. It is not enough that one-half of the human species (the images of God carved in ebony, as old Fuller calls them) shout his name as a champion and a saviour through vast burning zones, and moisten their parched lips with the gush of gratitude for deliverance

from chains—he must have a Prime-Minister drink his health at a Cabinet-dinner for aiding to rivet on those of his country and of Europe! He goes hand and heart along with Government in all their notions of legitimacy and political aggrandizement, in the hope that they will leave him a sort of *no-man's ground* of humanity in the Great Desert, where his reputation for benevolence and public spirit may spring up and flourish, till its head touches the clouds, and it stretches out its branches to the farthest part of the earth. He has no mercy on those who claim a property in negro-slaves as so much live-stock on their estates; the country rings with the applause of his wit, his eloquence, and his indignant appeals to common sense and humanity on this subject—but not a word has he to say, not a whisper does he breathe against the claim set up by the Despots of the Earth over their Continental subjects, but does every thing in his power to confirm and sanction it! He must give no offence. Mr. Wilberforce's humanity will go all lengths that it can with safety and discretion: but it is not to be supposed that it should lose him his seat for Yorkshire, the smile of Majesty, or the countenance of the loyal and pious. He is anxious to do all the good he can without hurting himself or his fair fame. His conscience and his character compound matters very amicably. He rather patronises honesty than is a martyr to it. His patriotism, his philanthropy are not so ill-bred, as to quarrel with his loyalty or to banish him from the first circles. He preaches vital Christianity to untutored savages; and tolerates its worst abuses in civilized states. He thus shows his respect for religion without offending the clergy, or circumscribing the sphere of his usefulness. There is in all this an appearance of a good deal of cant and tricking. His patriotism may be accused of being servile; his humanity ostentatious; his loyalty conditional; his religion a mixture of fashion and fanaticism. 'Out upon such half-faced fellowship!' Mr. Wilberforce has the pride of being familiar with the great; the vanity of being popular; the conceit of an approving conscience. He is coy in his approaches to power: his public spirit is, in a manner, *under the rose*. He thus reaps the credit of independence, without the obloquy; and secures the advantages of servility, without incurring any obligations. He has two strings to his bow:—he by no means neglects his worldly interests, while he expects a bright reversion in the skies. Mr. Wilberforce is far from being a hypocrite; but he is, we think, as fine a specimen of *moral equivocation* as can well be conceived. A hypocrite is one who is the very reverse of, or who despises the character he pretends to be: Mr. Wilberforce would be all that he pretends to be, and he is it in fact, as far as words, plausible theories, good inclinations, and easy

services go, but not in heart and soul, or so as to give up the appearance of any one of his pretensions to preserve the reality of any other. He carefully chooses his ground to fight the battles of loyalty, religion, and humanity, and it is such as is always safe and advantageous to himself! This is perhaps hardly fair, and it is of dangerous or doubtful tendency. Lord Eldon, for instance, is known to be a thorough-paced ministerialist: his opinion is only that of his party. But Mr. Wilberforce is not a party-man. He is the more looked up to on this account, but not with sufficient reason. By tampering with different temptations and personal projects, he has all the air of the most perfect independence, and gains a character for impartiality and candour, when he is only striking a balance in his mind between the *éclat* of differing from a Minister on some 'vantage ground, and the risk or odium that may attend it. He carries all the weight of his artificial popularity over to the Government on vital points and hard-run questions; while they, in return, lend him a little of the gilding of court-favour to set off his disinterested philanthropy and tramontane enthusiasm. As a leader or a follower, he makes an odd jumble of interests. By virtue of religious sympathy, he has brought the Saints over to the side of the abolition of Negro slavery. This his adversaries think hard and stealing a march upon them. What have the Saints to do with freedom or reform of any kind?—Mr. Wilberforce's style of speaking is not quite *parliamentary*, it is halfway between that and *evangelical*. He is altogether a *double-entendre*: the very tone of his voice is a *double-entendre*. It winds, and undulates, and glides up and down on texts of Scriptures, and scraps from Paley, and trite sophistry, and pathetic appeals to his hearers in a faltering, inprogressive, side-long way, like those birds of weak wing, that are borne from their strait-forward course

'By every little breath that under heaven is blown.'

Something of this fluctuating, time-serving principle was visible even in the great question of the Abolition of the Slave Trade. He was, at one time, half inclined to surrender it into Mr. Pitt's dilatory hands, and seemed to think the gloss of novelty was gone from it, and the gaudy colouring of popularity sunk into the *sable* ground from which it rose! It was, however, persisted in and carried to a triumphant conclusion. Mr. Wilberforce said too little on this occasion of one, compared with whom he was but the frontispiece to that great chapter in the history of the world—the mask, the varnishing, and painting—the man that effected it by Herculean labours of body, and equally gigantic labours of mind, was Clarkson, the true Apostle of human Redemption on that occasion, and who, it

is remarkable, resembles in his person and lineaments more than one of the Apostles in the *Cartoons* of Raphael. He deserves to be added to the Twelve![1]

MR. COBBETT.

People have about as substantial an idea of Cobbett as they have of Cribb. His blows are as hard, and he himself is as impenetrable. One has no notion of him as making use of a fine pen, but a great mutton-fist; his style stuns his readers, and he 'fillips the ear of the public with a three-man beetle.' He is too much for any single newspaper antagonist; 'lays waste' a city orator or Member of Parliament, and bears hard upon the Government itself. He is a kind of *fourth estate* in the politics of the country. He is not only unquestionably the most powerful political writer of the present day, but one of the best writers in the language. He speaks and thinks plain, broad, downright English. He might be said to have the clearness of Swift, the naturalness of Defoe, and the picturesque satirical description of Mandeville; if all such comparisons were not impertinent. A really great and original writer is like nobody but himself. In one sense, Sterne was not a wit, nor Shakespear a poet. It is easy to describe second-rate talents, because they fall into a class and enlist under a standard: but first-rate powers defy calculation or comparison, and can be defined only by themselves. They are *sui generis*, and make the class to which they belong. I have tried half-a-dozen times to describe Burke's style without ever succeeding; —its severe extravagance; its literal boldness; its matter-of-fact hyperboles; its running away with a subject, and from it at the same time—but there is no making it out, for there is no example of the same thing any where else. We have no common measure to refer to; and his qualities contradict even themselves.

Cobbett is not so difficult. He has been compared to Paine; and so far it is true there are no two writers who come more into juxtaposition from the nature of their subjects, from the internal resources on which they draw, and from the popular effect of their writings and their adaptation (though that is a bad word in the present case) to the capacity of every reader. But still if we turn to a volume of Paine's (his Common Sense or Rights of Man) we are

[1] After all, the best as well as most amusing comment on the character just described was that made by Sheridan, who being picked up in no very creditable plight by the watch, and asked rather roughly who he was, made answer—'I am Mr. Wilberforce!' The guardians of the night conducted him home with all the honours due to Grace and Nature.

struck (not to say somewhat refreshed) by the difference. Paine is a much more sententious writer than Cobbett. You cannot open a page in any of his best and earlier works without meeting with some maxim, some antithetical and memorable saying, which is a sort of starting-place for the argument, and the goal to which it returns. There is not a single *bon-mot*, a single sentence in Cobbett that has ever been quoted again. If any thing is ever quoted from him, it is an epithet of abuse or a nickname. He is an excellent hand at invention in that way, and has 'damnable iteration in him.' What could be better than his pestering Erskine year after year with his second title of Baron Clackmannan? He is rather too fond of such phrases as *the Sons and Daughters of Corruption*. Paine affected to reduce things to first principles, to announce self-evident truths. Cobbett troubles himself about little but the details and local circumstances. The first appeared to have made up his mind beforehand to certain opinions, and to try to find the most compendious and pointed expressions for them: his successor appears to have no clue, no fixed or leading principles, nor ever to have thought on a question till he sits down to write about it: but then there seems no end of his matters of fact and raw materials, which are brought out in all their strength and sharpness from not having been squared or frittered down or vamped up to suit a theory—he goes on with his descriptions and illustrations as if he would never come to a stop; they have all the force of novelty with all the familiarity of old acquaintance; his knowledge grows out of the subject, and his style is that of a man who has an absolute intuition of what he is talking about, and never thinks of any thing else. He deals in premises and speaks to evidence—the coming to a conclusion and summing up (which was Paine's *forte*) lies in a smaller compass. The one could not compose an elementary treatise on politics to become a manual for the popular reader; nor could the other in all probability have kept up a weekly journal for the same number of years with the same spirit, interest, and untired perseverance. Paine's writings are a sort of introduction to political arithmetic on a new plan: Cobbett keeps a day-book, and makes an entry at full of all the occurrences and troublesome questions that start up throughout the year. Cobbett, with vast industry, vast information, and the utmost power of making what he says intelligible, never seems to get at the beginning or come to the end of any question: Paine in a few short sentences seems by his peremptory manner 'to clear it from all controversy, past, present, and to come.' Paine takes a bird's-eye view of things.—Cobbett sticks close to them, inspects the component parts, and keeps fast hold of the smallest advantages they afford him. Or if I might here be

indulged in a pastoral allusion, Paine tries to enclose his ideas in a fold for security and repose; Cobbett lets *his* pour out upon the plain like a flock of sheep to feed and batten. Cobbett is a pleasanter writer for those to read who do not agree with him; for he is less dogmatical, goes more into the common grounds of fact and argument to which all appeal, is more desultory and various, and appears less to be driving at a previous conclusion than urged on by the force of present conviction. He is therefore tolerated by all parties, though he has made himself by turns obnoxious to all; and even those he abuses read him. The Reformers read him when he was a Tory, and the Tories read him now that he is a Reformer. He must, I think, however, be *caviare* to the Whigs.[1]

If he is less metaphysical and poetical than his celebrated prototype, he is more picturesque and dramatic. His episodes, which are numerous as they are pertinent, are striking, interesting, full of life and *naïveté*, minute, double measure running over, but never tedious —*nunquam sufflaminandus erat*. He is one of those writers who can never tire us—not even of himself; and the reason is, he is always 'full of matter.' He never runs to lees, never gives us the vapid leavings of himself, is never 'weary, stale, and unprofitable,' but always setting out afresh on his journey, clearing away some old nuisance, and turning up new mould. His egotism is delightful, for there is no affectation in it. He does not talk of himself for lack of something to write about, but because some circumstance that has happened to himself is the best possible illustration of the subject, and he is not the man to shrink from giving the best possible illustration of the subject from a squeamish delicacy. He likes both himself and his subject too well. He does not put himself before it, and say 'admire me first'; but places us in the same situation with himself, and makes us see all that he does. There is no blindman's buff, no conscious hints, no awkward ventriloquism, no testimonies of applause, no abstract, senseless self-complacency, no smuggled admiration of his own person by proxy; it is all plain and above-board. He writes himself plain William Cobbett, strips himself quite as naked as any body could wish—in a word, his egotism is full of individuality, and has room for very little vanity in it. We feel delighted, rub our hands, and draw our chair to the fire, when we come to a passage of this sort: we know it will be something new and good, manly and simple, not the same insipid story of self over again. We sit down at table with the writer, but it is of a course of rich viands—flesh, fish, and wild fowl—and not to a

[1] The late Lord Chancellor Thurlow used to say that Cobbett was the only writer that deserved the name of a political reasoner.

nominal entertainment, like that given to Barmecide in the Arabian Nights, who put off his visitors with calling for a number of exquisite things that never appeared, and with the honour of his company. Mr. Cobbett is not a *make-believe* writer. His worst enemy cannot say that of him. Still less is he a vulgar one. He must be a puny common-place critic indeed, who thinks him so. How fine were the graphical descriptions he sent us from America: what a transatlantic flavour, what a native *gusto*, what a fine *sauce piquante* of contempt they were seasoned with! If he had sat down to look at himself in the glass, instead of looking about him like Adam in Paradise, he would not have got up these articles in so capital a style. What a noble account of his first breakfast after his arrival in America! It might serve for a month. There is no scene on the stage more amusing. How well he paints the gold and scarlet plumage of the American birds, only to lament more pathetically the want of the wild wood-notes of his native land! The groves of the Ohio that had just fallen beneath the axe's stroke, 'live in his description,' and the turnips that he transplanted from Botley 'look green' in prose! How well at another time he describes the poor sheep that had got the tick, and had tumbled down in the agonies of death! It is a portrait in the manner of Bewick, with the strength, the simplicity, and feeling of that great naturalist. What havoc he makes, when he pleases, of the curls of Dr. Parr's wig and of the Whig consistency of Mr. ———! His Grammar, too, is as entertaining as a story-book. He is too hard, however, upon the style of others, and not enough (sometimes) on his own.

As a political partisan, no one can stand against him. With his brandished club, like Giant Despair in the Pilgrim's Progress, he knocks out their brains: and not only no individual, but no corrupt system, could hold out against his powerful and repeated attacks; but with the same weapon, swung round like a flail, with which he levels his antagonists, he lays his friends low, and puts his own party *hors de combat*. This is a bad propensity, and a worse principle in political tactics, though a common one. If his blows were straight forward and steadily directed to the same object, no unpopular minister could live before him; instead of which he lays about right and left, impartially and remorselessly, makes a clear stage, has all the ring to himself, and then runs out of it, just when he should stand his ground. He throws his head into his adversary's stomach, and takes away from him all inclination for the fight, hits fair or foul, strikes at every thing, and as you come up to his aid or stand ready to pursue his advantage, trips up your heels or lays you sprawling, and pummels you when down as much to his heart's content as

ever the Yanguesian carriers belaboured Rosinante with their pack-staves. '*He has the back-trick simply the best of any man in Illyria.*' He pays off both scores of old friendship and new-acquired enmity in a breath, in one perpetual volley, one raking fire of 'arrowy sleet' shot from his pen. However his own reputation or the cause may suffer in consequence, he cares not one pin about that, so that he disables all who oppose or who pretend to help him. In fact, he cannot bear success of any kind, not even of his own views or party; and if any principle were likely to become popular, would turn round against it, to show his power, in shouldering it on one side. In short, wherever power is, there is he against it; he naturally butts at all obstacles, as unicorns are attracted to oak-trees, and feels his own strength only by resistance to the opinions and wishes of the rest of the world. To sail with the stream, to agree with the company, is not his humour. If he could bring about a Reform in Parliament, the odds are that he would instantly fall foul of and try to mar his own handy-work; and he quarrels with his own creatures as soon as he has written them into a little vogue—and a prison. I do not think this is vanity or fickleness so much as a pugnacious disposition, that must have an antagonist power to contend with, and only finds itself at ease in systematic opposition. If it were not for this, the high towers and rotten places of the world would fall before the battering-ram of his hard-headed reasoning: but if he once found them tottering, he would apply his strength to prop them up, and disappoint the expectations of his followers. He cannot agree to any thing established, nor to set up any thing else in its stead. While it is established, he presses hard against it, because it presses upon him, at least in imagination. Let it crumble under his grasp, and the motive to resistance is gone. He then requires some other grievance to set his face against. His principle is repulsion, his nature contradiction: he is made up of mere antipathies; an Ishmaelite indeed, without a fellow. He is always playing at *hunt-the-slipper* in politics. He turns round upon whoever is next to him. The way to wean him from any opinion, and make him conceive an intolerable hatred against it, would be to place somebody near him who was perpetually dinning it in his ears. When he is in England, he does nothing but abuse the Boroughmongers, and laugh at the whole system: when he is in America, he grows impatient of freedom and a republic. If he had staid there a little longer, he would have become a loyal and a loving subject of his Majesty King George IV. He lampooned the French Revolution when it was hailed as the dawn of liberty by millions: by the time it was brought into almost universal ill-odour by some means or other (partly no

doubt by himself) he had turned, with one or two or three others, staunch Bonapartist. He is always of the militant, not of the triumphant party: so far he bears a gallant show of magnanimity; but his gallantry is hardly of the right stamp: it wants principle. For though he is not servile or mercenary, he is the victim of self-will. He must pull down and pull in pieces: it is not in his disposition to do otherwise. It is a pity; for with his great talents he might do great things, if he would go right forward to any useful object, make thorough-stitch work of any question, or join hand and heart with any principle. He changes his opinions as he does his friends, and much on the same account. He has no comfort in fixed principles: as soon as any thing is settled in his own mind, he quarrels with it. He has no satisfaction but in the chase after truth, runs a question down, worries and kills it, then quits it like vermin, and starts some new game, to lead him a new dance, and give him a fresh breathing through bog and brake, with the rabble yelping at his heels and the leaders perpetually at fault. This he calls sport-royal. He thinks it as good as cudgel-playing or single-stick, or any thing else that has life in it. He likes the cut and thrust, the falls, bruises, and dry blows of an argument: as to any good or useful results that may come of the amicable settling of it, any one is welcome to them for him. The amusement is over, when the matter is once fairly decided.

There is another point of view in which this may be put. I might say that Mr. Cobbett is a very honest man, with a total want of principle; and I might explain this paradox thus, I mean that he is, I think, in downright earnest in what he says, in the part he takes at the time; but in taking that part, he is led entirely by headstrong obstinacy, caprice, novelty, pique or personal motive of some sort, and not by a steadfast regard for truth or habitual anxiety for what is right uppermost in his mind. He is not a feed, time-serving, shuffling advocate (no man could write as he does who did not believe himself sincere)—but his understanding is the dupe and slave of his momentary, violent, and irritable humours. He does not adopt an opinion 'deliberately or for money'; yet his conscience is at the mercy of the first provocation he receives, of the first whim he takes in his head; he sees things through the medium of heat and passion, not with reference to any general principles, and his whole system of thinking is deranged by the first object that strikes his fancy or sours his temper.—One cause of this phenomenon is perhaps his want of a regular education. He is a self-taught man, and has the faults as well as excellences of that class of persons in their most striking and glaring excess. It must be acknowledged

that the Editor of the Political Register (the *two-penny trash*, as it was called, till a Bill passed the House to raise the price to sixpence) is not 'the gentleman and scholar:' though he has qualities that, with a little better management, would be worth (to the public) both those titles. For want of knowing what has been discovered before him, he has not certain general landmarks to refer to, or a general standard of thought to apply to individual cases. He relies on his own acuteness and the immediate evidence, without being acquainted with the comparative anatomy or philosophical structure of opinion. He does not view things on a large scale or at the horizon (dim and airy enough perhaps); but as they affect himself, —close, palpable, tangible. Whatever he finds out is his own, and he only knows what he finds out. He is in the constant hurry and fever of gestation: his brain teems incessantly with some fresh project. Every new light is the birth of a new system, the dawn of a new world to him. He is continually outstripping and overreaching himself. The last opinion is the only true one. He is wiser to-day than he was yesterday. Why should he not be wiser to-morrow than he was to-day?—Men of a learned education are not so sharp-witted as clever men without it; but they know the balance of the human intellect better: if they are more stupid, they are more steady; and are less liable to be led astray by their own sagacity and the overweening petulance of hard-earned and late-acquired wisdom. They do not fall in love with every meretricious extravagance at first sight, or mistake an old battered hypothesis for a vestal, because they are new to the ways of this old world. They do not seize upon it as a prize, but are safe from gross imposition by being as wise and no wiser than those who went before them.

Paine said on some occasion, 'What I have written, I have written'—as rendering any farther declaration of his principles unnecessary. Not so Mr. Cobbett. What he has written is no rule to him what he is to write. He learns something every day, and every week he takes the field to maintain the opinions of the last six days against friend or foe. I doubt whether this outrageous inconsistency, this headstrong fickleness, this understood want of all rule and method, does not enable him to go on with the spirit, vigour, and variety that he does. He is not pledged to repeat himself. Every new Register is a kind of new Prospectus. He blesses himself from all ties and shackles on his understanding; he has no mortgages on his brain; his notions are free and unincumbered. If he was put in trammels, he might become a vile hack like so many more. But he gives himself 'ample scope and verge enough.' He takes both sides of a question, and maintains one as sturdily as the other. If nobody

else can argue against him, he is a very good match for himself. He writes better in favour of reform than any body else; he used to write better against it. Wherever he is, there is the tug of war, the weight of the argument, the strength of abuse. He is not like a man in danger of being *bed-rid* in his faculties—he tosses and tumbles about his unwieldy bulk, and when he is tired of lying on one side, relieves himself by turning on the other. His shifting his point of view from time to time not merely adds variety and greater comforts to his topics (so that the Political Register is an armoury and magazine for all the materials and weapons of political warfare), but it gives a greater zest and liveliness to his manner of treating them. Mr. Cobbett takes nothing for granted, as what he has proved before; he does not write a book of reference. We see his ideas in their first concoction, fermenting and overflowing with the ebullitions of a lively conception. We look on at the actual process, and are put in immediate possession of the grounds and materials on which he forms his sanguine, unsettled conclusions. He does not give us samples of reasoning, but the whole solid mass, refuse and all.

——'He pours out all as plain
As downright Shippen or as old Montaigne.'

This is one cause of the clearness and force of his writings. An argument does not stop to stagnate and muddle in his brain, but passes at once to his paper. His ideas are served up, like pancakes, hot and hot. Fresh theories give him fresh courage. He is like a young and lusty bridegroom, that divorces a favourite speculation every morning, and marries a new one every night. He is not wedded to his notions, not he. He has not one Mrs. Cobbett among all his opinions. He makes the most of the last thought that has come in his way, seizes fast hold of it, rumples it about in all directions with rough strong hands, has his wicked will of it, takes a surfeit, and throws it away.—Our author's changing his opinions for new ones is not so wonderful: what is more remarkable is his felicity in forgetting his old ones. He does not pretend to consistency (like Mr. Coleridge); he frankly disavows all connexion with himself. He feels no personal responsibility in this way, and cuts a friend or principle with the same decided indifference that Antipholis of Ephesus cuts Ægeon of Syracuse. It is a hollow thing. The only time he ever grew romantic was in bringing over the relics of Mr. Thomas Paine with him from America, to go a progress with them through the disaffected districts. Scarce had he landed in Liverpool, when he left the bones of a great man to shift for themselves; and no sooner did he arrive in London, than he made a

speech to disclaim all participation in the political and theological sentiments of his late idol, and to place the whole stock of his admiration and enthusiasm towards him to the account of his financial speculations, and of his having predicted the fate of paper-money. If he had erected a little gold statue to him, it might have proved the sincerity of this assertion: but to make a martyr and a patron-saint of a man, and to dig up 'his canonized bones' in order to expose them as objects of devotion to the rabble's gaze, asks something that has more life and spirit in it, more mind and vivifying soul, than has to do with any calculation of pounds, shillings, and pence! The fact is, he *ratted* from his own project. He found the thing not so ripe as he had expected. His heart failed him: his enthusiasm fled, and he made his retraction. His admiration is short-lived: his contempt only is rooted, and his resentment lasting.—The above was only one instance of his building too much on practical *data*. He has an ill habit of prophesying, and goes on, though still deceived. The art of prophesying does not suit Mr. Cobbett's style. He has a knack of fixing names and times and places. According to him, the Reformed Parliament was to meet in March, 1818: it did not, and we heard no more of the matter. When his predictions fail, he takes no farther notice of them, but applies himself to new ones—like the country-people, who turn to see what weather there is in the almanac for the next week, though it has been out in its reckoning every day of the last.

Mr. Cobbett is great in attack, not in defence: he cannot fight an up-hill battle. He will not bear the least punishing. If any one turns upon him (which few people like to do), he immediately turns tail. Like an overgrown school-boy, he is so used to have it all his own way, that he cannot submit to any thing like competition, or a struggle for the mastery: he must lay on all the blows, and take none. He is bullying and cowardly; a Big Ben in politics, who will fall upon others and crush them by his weight, but is not prepared for resistance, and is soon staggered by a few smart blows. Whenever he has been set upon, he has slunk out of the controversy. The Edinburgh Review made (what is called) a dead set at him some years ago, to which he only retorted by an eulogy on the superior neatness of an English kitchen-garden to a Scotch one. I remember going one day into a bookseller's shop in Fleet-street to ask for the Review; and on my expressing my opinion to a young Scotchman, who stood behind the counter, that Mr. Cobbett might hit as hard in his reply, the North Briton said with some alarm—'But you don't think, Sir, Mr. Cobbett will be able to injure the Scottish nation?' I said I could not speak to that point, but I thought he was very well

able to defend himself. He however did not, but has born a grudge to the Edinburgh Review ever since, which he hates worse than the Quarterly. I cannot say I do.[1]

MR. CAMPBELL AND MR. CRABBE.

Mr. Campbell may be said to hold a place (among modern poets) between Lord Byron and Mr. Rogers. With much of the glossy splendour, the pointed vigour, and romantic interest of the one, he possesses the fastidious refinement, the classic elegance of the other. Mr. Rogers, as a writer, is too effeminate, Lord Byron too extravagant: Mr. Campbell is neither. The author of the *Pleasures of Memory* polishes his lines till they sparkle with the most exquisite finish; he attenuates them into the utmost degree of trembling softness: but we may complain, in spite of the delicacy and brilliancy of the execution, of a want of strength and solidity. The author of the *Pleasures of Hope*, with a richer and deeper vein of thought and imagination, works it out into figures of equal grace and dazzling beauty, avoiding on the one hand the tinsel of flimsy affectation, and on the other the vices of a rude and barbarous negligence. His Pegasus is not a rough, skittish colt, running wild among the mountains, covered with bur-docks and thistles, nor a tame, sleek pad, unable to get out of the same ambling pace; but a beautiful *manège* horse, full of life and spirit in itself, and subject to the complete controul of the rider. Mr. Campbell gives scope to his feelings and his fancy, and embodies them in a noble and naturally interesting subject; and he at the same time conceives himself called upon (in these days of critical nicety) to pay the exact attention to the expression of each thought, and to modulate each line into the most faultless harmony. The character of his mind is a lofty and self-scrutinising ambition, that strives to reconcile the integrity of general design with the perfect elaboration of each component part, that aims at striking effect, but is jealous of the means by which this is to be

[1] Mr. Cobbett speaks almost as well as he writes. The only time I ever saw him he seemed to me a very pleasant man—easy of access, affable, clear-headed, simple and mild in his manner, deliberate and unruffled in his speech, though some of his expressions were not very qualified. His figure is tall and portly: he has a good sensible face—rather full, with little grey eyes, a hard, square forehead, a ruddy complexion, with hair grey or powdered; and had on a scarlet broad-cloth waistcoat, with the flaps of the pockets hanging down, as was the custom for gentlemen-farmers in the last century, or as we see it in the pictures of Members of Parliament in the reign of George I. I certainly did not think less favourably of him for seeing him.

produced. Our poet is not averse to popularity (nay, he is tremblingly alive to it)—but self-respect is the primary law, the indispensable condition on which it must be obtained. We should dread to point out (even if we could) a false concord, a mixed metaphor, an imperfect rhyme, in any of Mr. Campbell's productions; for we think that all his fame would hardly compensate to him for the discovery. He seeks for perfection, and nothing evidently short of it can satisfy his mind. He is a *high finisher* in poetry, whose every work must bear inspection, whose slightest touch is precious—not a coarse dauber, who is contented to impose on public wonder and credulity by some huge, ill-executed design, or who endeavours to wear out patience and opposition together by a load of lumbering, feeble, awkward, improgressive lines—on the contrary, Mr. Campbell labours to lend every grace of execution to his subject, while he borrows his ardour and inspiration from it, and to deserve the laurels he has earned, by true genius and by true pains. There is an apparent consciousness of this in most of his writings. He has attained to great excellence by aiming at the greatest, by a cautious and yet daring selection of topics, and by studiously (and with a religious horror) avoiding all those faults which arise from grossness, vulgarity, haste, and disregard of public opinion. He seizes on the highest point of eminence, and strives to keep it to himself—he 'snatches a grace beyond the reach of art,' and will not let it go —he steeps a single thought or image so deep in the Tyrian dyes of a gorgeous imagination, that it throws its lustre over a whole page —every where vivid *ideal* forms hover (in intense conception) over the poet's verse, which ascends, like the aloe, to the clouds, with pure flowers at its top. Or, to take an humbler comparison (the pride of genius must sometimes stoop to the lowliness of criticism), Mr. Campbell's poetry often reminds us of the purple gilliflower, both for its colour and its scent, its glowing warmth, its rich, languid, sullen hue,

> 'Yet sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
> Or Cytherea's breath!'

There are those who complain of the little that Mr. Campbell has done in poetry, and who seem to insinuate that he is deterred by his own reputation from making any farther or higher attempts. But after having produced two poems that have gone to the heart of a nation, and are gifts to a world, he may surely linger out the rest of his life in a dream of immortality. There are moments in our lives so exquisite that all that remains of them afterwards seems useless and barren; and there are lines and stanzas in our author's early writings in which he may be thought to have exhausted all the sweetness and

all the essence of poetry, so that nothing farther was left to his efforts or his ambition. Happy is it for those few and fortunate worshippers of the Muse (not a subject of grudging or envy to others) who already enjoy in their life-time a foretaste of their future fame, who see their names accompanying them, like a cloud of glory, from youth to age,

> 'And by the vision splendid,
> Are on their way attended'—

and who know that they have built a shrine for the thoughts and feelings that were most dear to them, in the minds and memories of other men, till the language which they lisped in childhood is forgotten, or the human heart shall beat no more!

The *Pleasures of Hope* alone would not have called forth these remarks from us; but there are passages in the *Gertrude of Wyoming* of so rare and ripe a beauty, that they challenge, as they exceed all praise. Such, for instance, is the following peerless description of Gertrude's childhood:—

> 'A loved bequest,—and I may half impart
> To those that feel the strong paternal tie,
> How like a new existence to his heart
> That living flow'r uprose beneath his eye,
> Dear as she was from cherub infancy,
> From hours when she would round his garden play,
> To time when as the rip'ning years went by,
> Her lovely mind could culture well repay,
> And more engaging grew, from pleasing day to day.
>
> 'I may not paint those thousand infant charms;
> (Unconscious fascination, undesign'd!)
> The orison repeated in his arms,
> For God to bless her sire and all mankind;
> The book, the bosom on his knee reclined,
> Or how sweet fairy-lore he heard her con,
> (The playmate ere the teacher of her mind):
> All uncompanion'd else her heart had gone
> Till now, in Gertrude's eyes, their ninth blue summer shone.
>
> 'And summer was the tide, and sweet the hour,
> When sire and daughter saw, with fleet descent,
> An Indian from his bark approach their bow'r,
> Of buskin'd limb and swarthy lineament;
> The red wild feathers on his brow were blent,
> And bracelets bound the arm that help'd to light
> A boy, who seem'd, as he beside him went,
> Of Christian vesture and complexion bright,
> Led by his dusky guide, like morning brought by night.'

In the foregoing stanzas we particularly admire the line—

'Till now, in Gertrude's eyes, their ninth blue summer shone.'

It appears to us like the ecstatic union of natural beauty and poetic fancy, and in its playful sublimity resembles the azure canopy mirrored in the smiling waters, bright, liquid, serene, heavenly! A great outcry, we know, has prevailed for some time past against poetic diction and affected conceits, and, to a certain degree, we go along with it; but this must not prevent us from feeling the thrill of pleasure when we see beauty linked to beauty, like kindred flame to flame, or from applauding the voluptuous fancy that raises and adorns the fairy fabric of thought, that nature has begun! Pleasure is 'scattered in stray-gifts o'er the earth'—beauty streaks the 'famous poet's page' in occasional lines of inconceivable brightness; and wherever this is the case, no splenetic censures or 'jealous leer malign,' no idle theories or cold indifference should hinder us from greeting it with rapture. There are other parts of this poem equally delightful, in which there is a light startling as the red-bird's wing; a perfume like that of the magnolia; a music like the murmuring of pathless woods or of the everlasting ocean. We conceive, however, that Mr. Campbell excels chiefly in sentiment and imagery. The story moves slow, and is mechanically conducted, and rather resembles a Scotch canal carried over lengthened aqueducts and with a number of *locks* in it, than one of those rivers that sweep in their majestic course, broad and full, over Transatlantic plains and lose themselves in rolling gulfs, or thunder down lofty precipices. But in the centre, the inmost recesses of our poet's heart, the pearly dew of sensibility is distilled and collects, like the diamond in the mine, and the structure of his fame rests on the crystal columns of a polished imagination. We prefer the *Gertrude* to the *Pleasures of Hope*, because with perhaps less brilliancy, there is more of tenderness and natural imagery in the former. In the *Pleasures of Hope* Mr. Campbell had not completely emancipated himself from the trammels of the more artificial style of poetry from epigram, and antithesis, and hyperbole. The best line in it, in which earthly joys are said to be—

'Like angels' visits, few and far between'—

is a borrowed one.[1] But in the Gertrude of Wyoming 'we perceive a softness coming over the heart of the author, and the scales and crust of formality, that fence in his couplets and give them a some-

[1] Like angels' visits, short and far between'—
Blair's Grave.

what glittering and rigid appearance, fall off,' and he has succeeded in engrafting the wild and more expansive interest of the romantic school of poetry on classic elegance and precision. After the poem we have just named, Mr. Campbell's Songs are the happiest efforts of his Muse:—breathing freshness, blushing like the morn, they seem, like clustering roses, to weave a chaplet for love and liberty; or their bleeding words gush out in mournful and hurried succession, like 'ruddy drops that visit the sad heart' of thoughtful Humanity. The *Battle of Hohenlinden* is of all modern compositions the most lyrical in spirit and in sound. To justify this encomium, we need only recall the lines to the reader's memory.

'On Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay th' untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

'But Linden saw another sight,
When the drum beat at dead of night,
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of her scenery.

'By torch and trumpet fast array'd,
Each horseman drew his battle blade,
And furious every charger neigh'd,
To join the dreadful revelry.

'Then shook the hills with thunder riv'n,
Then rush'd the steed to battle driv'n,
And louder than the bolts of heav'n
Far flash'd the red artillery.

'But redder yet that light shall glow
On Linden's hills of stained snow,
And bloodier yet the torrent flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

''Tis morn, but scarce yon level sun
Can pierce the war-clouds, rolling[1] dun,
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun
Shout in their sulph'rous canopy.

'The combat deepens. On, ye brave,
Who rush to glory, or the grave!
Wave, Munich! all thy banners wave!
And charge with all thy chivalry!

[1] Is not this word, which occurs in the last line but one, (as well as before) an instance of that repetition, which we so often meet with in the most correct and elegant writers?

'Few, few shall part where many meet!
The snow shall be their winding-sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre.'

Mr. Campbell's prose-criticisms on contemporary and other poets (which have appeared in the New Monthly Magazine) are in a style at once chaste, temperate, guarded, and just.

Mr. Crabbe presents an entire contrast to Mr. Campbell:—The one is the most ambitious and aspiring of living poets, the other the most humble and prosaic. If the poetry of the one is like the arch of the rainbow, spanning and adorning the earth, that of the other is like a dull, leaden cloud hanging over it. Mr. Crabbe's style might be cited as an answer to Audrey's question—'Is poetry a true thing?' There are here no ornaments, no flights of fancy, no illusions of sentiment, no tinsel of words. His song is one sad reality, one unraised, unvaried note of unavailing woe. Literal fidelity serves him in the place of invention; he assumes importance by a number of petty details; he rivets attention by being tedious. He not only deals in incessant matters of fact, but in matters of fact of the most familiar, the least animating, and the most unpleasant kind; but he relies for the effect of novelty on the microscopic minuteness with which he dissects the most trivial objects—and for the interest he excites, on the unshrinking determination with which he handles the most painful. His poetry has an official and professional air. He is called in to cases of difficult births, of fractured limbs, or breaches of the peace; and makes out a parochial list of accidents and offences. He takes the most trite, the most gross and obvious and revolting part of nature, for the subject of his elaborate descriptions; but it is Nature still, and Nature is a great and mighty Goddess! It is well for the Reverend Author that it is so. Individuality is, in his theory, the only definition of poetry. Whatever *is*, he hitches into rhyme. Whoever makes an exact image of any thing on the earth, however deformed or insignificant, according to him, must succeed—and he himself has succeeded. Mr. Crabbe is one of the most popular and admired of our living authors. That he is so, can be accounted for on no other principle than the strong ties that bind us to the world about us, and our involuntary yearnings after whatever in any manner powerfully and directly reminds us of it. His Muse is not one of *the Daughters of Memory*, but the old toothless, mumbling, dame herself, doling out the gossip and scandal of the neighbourhood, recounting *totidem verbis et literis*, what happens in every place of the kingdom every hour in the year, and fastening always on the worst as the most

palatable morsels. But she is a circumstantial old lady, communicative, scrupulous, leaving nothing to the imagination, harping on the smallest grievances, a village oracle and critic, most veritable, most identical, bringing us acquainted with persons and things just as they chanced to exist, and giving us a local interest in all she knows and tells. Mr. Crabbe's Helicon is choked up with weeds and corruption; it reflects no light from heaven, it emits no cheerful sound: no flowers of love, of hope, or joy spring up near it, or they bloom only to wither in a moment. Our poet's verse does not put a spirit of youth in every thing, but a spirit of fear, despondency, and decay: it is not an electric spark to kindle or expand, but acts like the torpedo's touch to deaden or contract. It lends no dazzling tints to fancy, it aids no soothing feelings in the heart, it gladdens no prospect, it stirs no wish; in its view the current of life runs slow, dull, cold, dispirited, half under ground, muddy, and clogged with all creeping things. The world is one vast infirmary; the hill of Parnassus is a penitentiary, of which our author is the overseer: to read him is a penance, yet we read on! Mr. Crabbe, it must be confessed, is a repulsive writer. He contrives to 'turn diseases to commodities,' and makes a virtue of necessity. He puts us out of conceit with this world, which perhaps a severe divine should do; yet does not, as a charitable divine ought, point to another. His morbid feelings droop and cling to the earth, grovel where they should soar; and throw a dead weight on every aspiration of the soul after the good or beautiful. By degrees we submit, and are reconciled to our fate, like patients to the physician, or prisoners in the condemned cell. We can only explain this by saying, as we said before, that Mr. Crabbe gives us one part of nature, the mean, the little, the disgusting, the distressing; that he does this thoroughly and like a master, and we forgive all the rest.

Mr. Crabbe's first poems were published so long ago as the year 1782, and received the approbation of Dr. Johnson only a little before he died. This was a testimony from an enemy; for Dr. Johnson was not an admirer of the simple in style or minute in description. Still he was an acute, strong-minded man, and could see truth when it was presented to him, even through the mist of his prejudices and his foibles. There was something in Mr. Crabbe's intricate points that did not, after all, so ill accord with the Doctor's purblind vision; and he knew quite enough of the petty ills of life to judge of the merit of our poet's descriptions, though he himself chose to slur them over in high-sounding dogmas or general invectives. Mr. Crabbe's earliest poem of the *Village* was recommended to the notice of Dr. Johnson by Sir Joshua Reynolds; and we cannot help thinking that a taste for that sort of poetry, which leans for support on the truth and fidelity

of its imitations of nature, began to display itself much about that time, and, in a good measure, in consequence of the direction of the public taste to the subject of painting. Book-learning, the accumulation of wordy common-places, the gaudy pretensions of poetical fiction, had enfeebled and perverted our eye for nature. The study of the fine arts, which came into fashion about forty years ago, and was then first considered as a polite accomplishment, would tend imperceptibly to restore it. Painting is essentially an imitative art; it cannot subsist for a moment on empty generalities: the critic, therefore, who had been used to this sort of substantial entertainment, would be disposed to read poetry with the eye of a connoisseur, would be little captivated with smooth, polished, unmeaning periods, and would turn with double eagerness and relish to the force and precision of individual details, transferred, as it were, to the page from the canvas. Thus an admirer of Teniers or Hobbima might think little of the pastoral sketches of Pope or Goldsmith; even Thomson describes not so much the naked object as what he sees in his mind's eye, surrounded and glowing with the mild, bland, genial vapours of his brain:—but the adept in Dutch interiors, hovels, and pig-styes must find in Mr. Crabbe a man after his own heart. He is the very thing itself; he paints in words, instead of colours: there is no other difference. As Mr. Crabbe is not a painter, only because he does not use a brush and colours, so he is for the most part a poet, only because he writes in lines of ten syllables. All the rest might be found in a newspaper, an old magazine, or a county-register. Our author is himself a little jealous of the prudish fidelity of his homely Muse, and tries to justify himself by precedents. He brings as a parallel instance of merely literal description, Pope's lines on the gay Duke of Buckingham, beginning 'In the worst inn's worst room see Villiers lies!' But surely nothing can be more dissimilar. Pope describes what is striking, Crabbe would have described merely what was there. The objects in Pope stand out to the fancy from the mixture of the mean with the gaudy, from the contrast of the scene and the character. There is an appeal to the imagination; you see what is passing in a poetical point of view. In Crabbe there is no foil, no contrast, no impulse given to the mind. It is all on a level and of a piece. In fact, there is so little connection between the subject-matter of Mr. Crabbe's lines and the ornament of rhyme which is tacked to them, that many of his verses read like serious burlesque, and the parodies which have been made upon them are hardly so quaint as the originals.

Mr. Crabbe's great fault is certainly that he is a sickly, a querulous, a uniformly dissatisfied poet. He sings the country; and he sings

it in a pitiful tone. He chooses this subject only to take the charm out of it, and to dispel the illusion, the glory, and the dream, which had hovered over it in golden verse from Theocritus to Cowper. He sets out with professing to overturn the theory which had hallowed a shepherd's life, and made the names of grove and valley music to our ears, in order to give us truth in its stead; but why not lay aside the fool's cap and bells at once? Why not insist on the unwelcome reality in plain prose? If our author is a poet, why trouble himself with statistics? If he is a statistic writer, why set his ill news to harsh and grating verse? The philosopher in painting the dark side of human nature may have reason on his side, and a moral lesson or remedy in view. The tragic poet, who shows the sad vicissitudes of things and the disappointments of the passions, at least strengthens our yearnings after imaginary good, and lends wings to our desires, by which we, 'at one bound, high overleap all bound' of actual suffering. But Mr. Crabbe does neither. He gives us discoloured paintings of life; helpless, repining, unprofitable, unedifying distress. He is not a philosopher, but a sophist, a misanthrope in verse; a *namby-pamby* Mandeville, a Malthus turned metrical romancer. He professes historical fidelity; but his vein is not dramatic; nor does he give us the *pros* and *cons* of that versatile gipsey, Nature. He does not indulge his fancy or sympathise with us, or tell us how the poor feel; but how he should feel in their situation, which we do not want to know. He does not weave the web of their lives of a mingled yarn, good and ill together, but clothes them all in the same dingy linsey-woolsey, or tinges them with a green and yellow melancholy. He blocks out all possibility of good, cancels the hope, or even the wish for it as a weakness; checkmates Tityrus and Virgil at the game of pastoral cross-purposes, disables all his adversary's white pieces, and leaves none but black ones on the board. The situation of a country clergyman is not necessarily favourable to the cultivation of the Muse. He is set down, perhaps, as he thinks, in a small curacy for life, and he takes his revenge by imprisoning the reader's imagination in luckless verse. Shut out from social converse, from learned colleges and halls, where he passed his youth, he has no cordial fellow-feeling with the unlettered manners of the *Village* or the *Borough*; and he describes his neighbours as more uncomfortable and discontented than himself. All this, while he dedicates successive volumes to rising generations of noble patrons; and while he desolates a line of coast with sterile, blighting lines, the only leaf of his books where honour, beauty, worth, or pleasure bloom, is that inscribed to the Rutland family! We might adduce

instances of what we have said from every page of his works: let one suffice—

> 'Thus by himself compelled to live each day,
> To wait for certain hours the tide's delay;
> At the same times the same dull views to see,
> The bounding marsh-bank and the blighted tree;
> The water only when the tides were high,
> When low, the mud half-covered and half-dry;
> The sun-burnt tar that blisters on the planks,
> And bank-side stakes in their uneven ranks;
> Heaps of entangled weeds that slowly float,
> As the tide rolls by the impeded boat.
> When tides were neap, and in the sultry day,
> Through the tall bounding mud-banks made their way,
> Which on each side rose swelling, and below
> The dark warm flood ran silently and slow;
> There anchoring, Peter chose from man to hide,
> There hang his head, and view the lazy tide
> In its hot slimy channel slowly glide;
> Where the small eels, that left the deeper way
> For the warm shore, within the shallows play;
> Where gaping muscles, left upon the mud,
> Slope their slow passage to the fall'n flood:
> Here dull and hopeless he 'd lie down and trace
> How side-long crabs had crawled their crooked race;
> Or sadly listen to the tuneless cry
> Of fishing gull or clanging golden-eye;
> What time the sea-birds to the marsh would come,
> And the loud bittern, from the bull-rush home,
> Gave from the salt-ditch-side the bellowing boom:
> He nursed the feelings these dull scenes produce
> And loved to stop beside the opening sluice;
> Where the small stream, confined in narrow bound,
> Ran with a dull, unvaried, saddening sound;
> Where all, presented to the eye or ear,
> Oppressed the soul with misery, grief, and fear.'

This is an exact *fac-simile* of some of the most unlovely parts of the creation. Indeed the whole of Mr. Crabbe's *Borough*, from which the above passage is taken, is done so to the life, that it seems almost like some sea-monster, crawled out of the neighbouring slime, and harbouring a breed of strange vermin, with a strong local scent of tar and bulge-water. Mr. Crabbe's *Tales* are more readable than his *Poems*; but in proportion as the interest increases, they become more oppressive. They turn, one and all, upon the same sort of teazing, helpless, mechanical, unimaginative distress;—and though

it is not easy to lay them down, you never wish to take them up again. Still in this way, they are highly finished, striking, and original portraits, worked out with an eye to nature, and an intimate knowledge of the small and intricate folds of the human heart. Some of the best are the *Confidant*, the story of *Silly Shore*, the *Young Poet*, the *Painter*. The episode of *Phœbe Dawson* in the *Village*, is one of the most tender and pensive; and the character of the methodist parson who persecutes the sailor's widow with his godly, selfish love is one of the most profound. In a word, if Mr. Crabbe's writings do not add greatly to the store of entertaining and delightful fiction, yet they will remain, 'as a thorn in the side of poetry,' perhaps for a century to come!

MR. T. MOORE—MR. LEIGH HUNT

'Or winglet of the fairy humming-bird,
Like atoms of the rainbow fluttering round.'

CAMPBELL.

THE lines placed at the head of this sketch, from a contemporary writer, appear to us very descriptive of Mr. Moore's poetry. His verse is like a shower of beauty; a dance of images; a stream of music; or like the spray of the water-fall, tinged by the morning-beam with rosy light. The characteristic distinction of our author's style is this continuous and incessant flow of voluptuous thoughts and shining allusions. He ought to write with a crystal pen on silver paper. His subject is set off by a dazzling veil of poetic diction, like a wreath of flowers gemmed with innumerous dew-drops, that weep, tremble, and glitter in liquid softness and pearly light, while the song of birds ravishes the ear, and languid odours breathe around, and Aurora opens Heaven's smiling portals, Peris and nymphs peep through the golden glades, and an Angel's wing glances over the glossy scene.

'No dainty flower or herb that grows on ground,
No arboret with painted blossoms drest,
And smelling sweet, but there it might be found
To bud out fair, and its sweet smells throw all around.

'No tree, whose branches did not bravely spring;
No branch, whereon a fine bird did not sit;
No bird, but did her shrill notes sweetly sing;
No song, but did contain a lovely dit:
Trees, branches, birds, and songs were framed fit
For to allure frail minds to careless ease.' . . .

Mr. Campbell's imagination is fastidious and select; and hence, though we meet with more exquisite beauties in his writings, we meet with them more rarely: there is comparatively a dearth of ornament. But Mr. Moore's strictest economy is 'wasteful and superfluous excess': he is always liberal, and never at a loss; for sooner than not stimulate and delight the reader, he is willing to be tawdry, or superficial, or common-place. His Muse must be fine at any rate, though she should paint, and wear cast-off decorations. Rather than have any lack of excitement, he repeats himself; and 'Eden, and Eblis, and cherub-smiles' fill up the pauses of the sentiment with a sickly monotony.—It has been too much our author's object to pander to the artificial taste of the age; and his productions, however brilliant and agreeable, are in consequence somewhat meretricious and effeminate. It was thought formerly enough to have an occasionally fine passage in the progress of a story or a poem, and an occasionally striking image or expression in a fine passage or description. But this style, it seems, was to be exploded as rude, Gothic, meagre, and dry. Now all must be raised to the same tantalising and preposterous level. There must be no pause, no interval, no repose, no gradation. Simplicity and truth yield up the palm to affectation and grimace. The craving of the public mind after novelty and effect is a false and uneasy appetite that must be pampered with fine words at every step—we must be tickled with sound, startled with show, and relieved by the importunate, uninterrupted display of fancy and verbal tinsel as much as possible from the fatigue of thought or shock of feeling. A poem is to resemble an exhibition of fire-works, with a continual explosion of quaint figures and devices, flash after flash, that surprise for the moment, and leave no trace of light or warmth behind them. Or modern poetry in its retrograde progress comes at last to be constructed on the principles of the modern Opera, where an attempt is made to gratify every sense at every instant, and where the understanding alone is insulted and the heart mocked. It is in this view only that we can discover that Mr. Moore's poetry is vitiated or immoral,—it seduces the taste and enervates the imagination. It creates a false standard of reference, and inverts or decompounds the natural order of association, in which objects strike the thoughts and feelings. His is the poetry of the bath, of the toilette, of the saloon, of the fashionable world; not the poetry of nature, of the heart, or of human life. He stunts and enfeebles equally the growth of the imagination and the affections, by not taking the seed of poetry and sowing it in the ground of truth, and letting it expand in the dew and rain, and shoot up to heaven,

'And spread its sweet leaves to the air,
Or dedicate its beauty to the sun,'—

instead of which he anticipates and defeats his own object, by plucking flowers and blossoms from the stem, and setting them in the ground of idleness and folly—or in the cap of his own vanity, where they soon wither and disappear, 'dying or ere they sicken!' This is but a sort of child's play, a short-sighted ambition. In Milton we meet with many prosaic lines, either because the subject does not require raising or because they are necessary to connect the story, or serve as a relief to other passages—there is not such a thing to be found in all Mr. Moore's writings. His volumes present us with 'a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets'—but we cannot add—'where no crude surfeit reigns.' He indeed cloys with sweetness; he obscures with splendour; he fatigues with gaiety. We are stifled on beds of roses—we literally lie 'on the rack of restless ecstacy.' His flowery fancy 'looks so fair and smells so sweet, that the sense aches at it.' His verse droops and languishes under a load of beauty, like a bough laden with fruit. His gorgeous style is like 'another morn risen on mid-noon.' There is no passage that is not made up of blushing lines, no line that is not enriched with a sparkling metaphor, no image that is left unadorned with a double epithet—all his verbs, nouns, adjectives, are equally glossy, smooth, and beautiful. Every stanza is transparent with light, perfumed with odours, floating in liquid harmony, melting in luxurious, evanescent delights. His Muse is never contented with an offering from one sense alone, but brings another rifled charm to match it, and revels in a fairy round of pleasure. The interest is not dramatic, but melo-dramatic—it is a mixture of painting, poetry, and music, of the natural and preternatural, of obvious sentiment and romantic costume. A rose is a *Gul*, a nightingale a *Bulbul*. We might fancy ourselves in an eastern harem, amidst Ottomans, and otto of roses, and veils and spangles, and marble pillars, and cool fountains, and Arab maids and Genii, and magicians, and Peris, and cherubs, and what not? Mr. Moore has a little mistaken the art of poetry for the *cosmetic art*. He does not compose an historic group, or work out a single figure; but throws a variety of elementary sensations, of vivid impressions together, and calls it a description. He makes out an inventory of beauty—the smile on the lips, the dimple on the cheeks, *item*, golden locks, *item*, a pair of blue wings, *item*, a silver sound, with breathing fragrance and radiant light, and thinks it a character or a story. He gets together a number of fine things and fine names, and thinks that, flung on heaps, they make up a fine poem. This dissipated, fulsome,

painted, patch-work style may succeed in the levity and languor of the *boudoir*, or might have been adapted to the Pavilions of royalty, but it is not the style of Parnassus, nor a passport to Immortality. It is not the taste of the ancients, ''tis not classical lore'——nor the fashion of Tibullus, or Theocritus, or Anacreon, or Virgil, or Ariosto, or Pope, or Byron, or any great writer among the living or the dead, but it is the style of our English Anacreon, and it is (or was) the fashion of the day! Let one example (and that an admired one), taken from *Lalla Rookh*, suffice to explain the mystery and soften the harshness of the foregoing criticism.

'Now, upon Syria's land of roses
Softly the light of eve reposes,
And, like a glory, the broad sun
Hangs over sainted Lebanon;
Whose head in wintry grandeur towers,
And whitens with eternal sleet,
While summer, in a vale of flowers,
Is sleeping rosy at his feet.

'To one who look'd from upper air
O'er all the enchanted regions there,
How beauteous must have been the glow,
The life, the sparkling from below!
Fair gardens, shining streams, with ranks
Of golden melons on their banks,
More golden where the sun-light falls;—
Gay lizards, glittering on the walls
Of ruin'd shrines, busy and bright
As they were all alive with light;—
And, yet more splendid, numerous flocks
Of pigeons, settling on the rocks,
With their rich restless wings, that gleam
Variously in the crimson beam
Of the warm west,—as if inlaid
With brilliants from the mine, or made
Of tearless rainbows, such as span
The' unclouded skies of Peristan!
And then, the mingling sounds that come,
Of shepherd's ancient reed, with hum
Of the wild bees of Palestine,
Banquetting through the flowery vales;—
And, Jordan, those sweet banks of thine,
And woods, so full of nightingales!'

The following lines are the very perfection of Della Cruscan sentiment, and affected orientalism of style. The Peri exclaims on

finding that old talisman and hackneyed poetical machine, 'a penitent tear'—

> 'Joy, joy for ever! my task is done—
> The gates are pass'd, and Heaven is won!
> Oh! am I not happy? I am, I am—
> To thee, sweet Eden! how dark and sad
> Are the diamond turrets of Shadukiam,
> And the fragrant bowers of Amberabad.'

There is in all this a play of fancy, a glitter of words, a shallowness of thought, and a want of truth and solidity that is wonderful, and that nothing but the heedless, rapid glide of the verse could render tolerable:——it seems that the poet, as well as the lover,

> 'May bestride the Gossamer,
> That wantons in the idle, summer air,
> And yet not fall, so light is vanity!'

Mr. Moore ought not to contend with serious difficulties or with entire subjects. He can write verses, not a poem. There is no principle of massing or of continuity in his productions—neither height nor breadth nor depth of capacity. There is no truth of representation, no strong internal feeling—but a continual flutter and display of affected airs and graces, like a finished coquette, who hides the want of symmetry by extravagance of dress, and the want of passion by flippant forwardness and unmeaning sentimentality. All is flimsy, all is florid to excess. His imagination may dally with insect beauties, with Rosicrucian spells; may describe a butterfly's wing, a flower-pot, a fan: but it should not attempt to span the great outlines of nature, or keep pace with the sounding march of events, or grapple with the strong fibres of the human heart. The great becomes turgid in his hands, the pathetic insipid. If Mr. Moore were to describe the heights of Chimboraco, instead of the loneliness, the vastness and the shadowy might, he would only think of adorning it with roseate tints, like a strawberry-ice, and would transform a magician's fortress in the Himmalaya (stripped of its mysterious gloom and frowning horrors) into a jeweller's toy, to be set upon a lady's toilette. In proof of this, see above 'the diamond turrets of Shadukiam,' &c. The description of Mokanna in the fight, though it has spirit and grandeur of effect, has still a great alloy of the mock-heroic in it. The route of blood and death, which is otherwise well marked, is infested with a swarm of 'fire-fly' fancies.

> 'In vain Mokanna, 'midst the general flight,
> Stands, like the red moon, in some stormy night,
> Among the fugitive clouds, that hurrying by,
> Leave only her unshaken in the sky.'

This simile is fine, and would have been perfect, but that the moon is not red, and that she seems to hurry by the clouds, not they by her.

The description of the warrior's youthful adversary,

> ——'Whose coming seems
> A light, a glory, such as breaks in dreams——'

is fantastic and enervated—a field of battle has nothing to do with dreams:—and again, the two lines immediately after,

> 'And every sword, true as o'er billows dim
> The needle tracks the load-star, following him'—

are a mere piece of enigmatical ingenuity and scientific *mimminee-pimminee*.

We cannot except the *Irish Melodies* from the same censure. If these national airs do indeed express the soul of impassioned feeling in his countrymen, the case of Ireland is hopeless. If these prettinesses pass for patriotism, if a country can heave from its heart's core only these vapid, varnished sentiments, lip-deep, and let its tears of blood evaporate in an empty conceit, let it be governed as it has been. There are here no tones to waken Liberty, to console Humanity. Mr. Moore converts the wild harp of Erin into a musical snuff-box![1] —We *do* except from this censure the author's political squibs, and the 'Twopenny Post-bag.' These are essences, are 'nests of spicery,' bitter and sweet, honey and gall together. No one can so well describe the set speech of a dull formalist,[2] or the flowing locks of a Dowager,

> 'In the manner of Ackermann's dresses for May.'

His light, agreeable, polished style pierces through the body of the court—hits off the faded graces of 'an Adonis of fifty,' weighs the vanity of fashion in tremulous scales, mimics the grimace of affectation and folly, shows up the littleness of the great, and spears

[1] Compare his songs with Burns's.

[2] 'There was a little man, and he had a little soul,
And he said, Little soul, let us try,' &c.

Parody on

'There was a little man, and he had a little gun.'—

One should think this exquisite ridicule of a pedantic effusion might have silenced for ever the automaton that delivered it: but the official personage in question at the close of the Session addressed an extra-official congratulation to the Prince Regent on a bill that had *not* passed—as if to repeat and insist upon our errors were to justify them.

a phalanx of statesmen with its glittering point as with a diamond broach.

> 'In choosing songs the Regent named,
> "Had I a heart for falsehood fram'd:"
> While gentle Hertford begg'd and pray'd
> For "Young I am, and sore afraid."'

Nothing in Pope or Prior ever surpassed the delicate insinuation and adroit satire of these lines, and hundreds more of our author's composition. We wish he would not take pains to make us think of them with less pleasure than formerly.—The 'Fudge Family' is in the same spirit, but with a little falling-off. There is too great a mixture of undisguised Jacobinism and fashionable *slang*. The 'divine Fanny Bias' and 'the mountains *à la Russe*' figure in somewhat quaintly with Buonaparte and the Bourbons. The poet also launches the lightning of political indignation; but it rather plays round and illumines his own pen than reaches the devoted heads at which it is aimed!

Mr. Moore is in private life an amiable and estimable man. The embellished and voluptuous style of his poetry, his unpretending origin, and his *mignon* figure, soon introduced him to the notice of the great, and his gaiety, his wit, his good-humour, and many agreeable accomplishments fixed him there, the darling of his friends and the idol of fashion. If he is no longer familiar with Royalty as with his garter, the fault is not his—his adherence to his principles caused the separation—his love of his country was the cloud that intercepted the sunshine of court-favour. This is so far well. Mr. Moore vindicates his own dignity; but the sense of intrinsic worth, of wide-spread fame, and of the intimacy of the great makes him perhaps a little too fastidious and *exigeant* as to the pretensions of others. He has been so long accustomed to the society of Whig Lords, and so enchanted with the smile of beauty and fashion, that he really fancies himself one of the *set*, to which he is admitted on sufferance, and tries very unnecessarily to keep others out of it. He talks familiarly of works that are or are not read 'in *our* circle'; and seated smiling and at his ease in a coronet-coach, enlivening the owner by his brisk sallies and Attic conceits, is shocked, as he passes, to see a Peer of the realm shake hands with a poet. There is a little indulgence of spleen and envy, a little servility and pandering to aristocratic pride in this proceeding. Is Mr. Moore bound to advise a Noble Poet to get as fast as possible out of a certain publication, lest he should not be able to give an account at Holland or at Lansdown House, how his friend Lord B—— had associated himself with his friend L. H——? Is he afraid that the 'Spirit of Monarchy' will eclipse the 'Fables for

the Holy Alliance' in virulence and plain speaking? Or are the members of the 'Fudge Family' to secure a monopoly for the abuse of the Bourbons and the doctrine of Divine Right? Because he is genteel and sarcastic, may not others be paradoxical and argumentative? Or must no one bark at a Minister or General, unless they have been first dandled, like a little French pug-dog, in the lap of a lady of quality? Does Mr. Moore insist on the double claim of birth and genius as a title to respectability in all advocates of the popular side—but himself? Or is he anxious to keep the pretensions of his patrician and plebeian friends quite separate, so as to be himself the only point of union, a sort of *double meaning*, between the two? It is idle to think of setting bounds to the weakness and illusions of self-love as long as it is confined to a man's own breast; but it ought not to be made a plea for holding back the powerful hand that is stretched out to save another struggling with the tide of popular prejudice, who has suffered shipwreck of health, fame, and fortune in a common cause, and who has deserved the aid and the good wishes of all who are (on principle) embarked in the same cause by equal zeal and honesty, if not by equal talents to support and to adorn it!

We shall conclude the present article with a short notice of an individual who, in the cast of his mind and in political principle, bears no very remote resemblance to the patriot and wit just spoken of, and on whose merits we should descant at greater length, but that personal intimacy might be supposed to render us partial. It is well when personal intimacy produces this effect; and when the light, that dazzled us at a distance, does not on a closer inspection turn out an opaque substance. This is a charge that none of his friends will bring against Mr. Leigh Hunt. He improves upon acquaintance. The author translates admirably into the man. Indeed the very faults of his style are virtues in the individual. His natural gaiety and sprightliness of manner, his high animal spirits, and the *vinous* quality of his mind, produce an immediate fascination and intoxication in those who come in contact with him, and carry off in society whatever in his writings may to some seem flat and impertinent. From great sanguineness of temper, from great quickness and unsuspecting simplicity, he runs on to the public as he does at his own fireside, and talks about himself, forgetting that he is not always among friends. His look, his tone are required to point many things that he says: his frank, cordial manner reconciles you instantly to a little over-bearing, over-weening self-complacency. 'To be admired, he needs but to be seen': but perhaps he ought to be seen to be fully appreciated. No one ever sought his society who did not come away

with a more favourable opinion of him: no one was ever disappointed, except those who had entertained idle prejudices against him. He sometimes trifles with his readers, or tires of a subject (from not being urged on by the stimulus of immediate sympathy)—but in conversation he is all life and animation, combining the vivacity of the schoolboy with the resources of the wit and the taste of the scholar. The personal character, the spontaneous impulses, do not appear to excuse the author, unless you are acquainted with his situation and habits—like some proud beauty who gives herself what we think strange airs and graces under a mask, but who is instantly forgiven when she shews her face. We have said that Lord Byron is a sublime coxcomb: why should we not say that Mr. Hunt is a delightful one? There is certainly an exuberance of satisfaction in his manner which is more than the strict logical premises warrant, and which dull and phlegmatic constitutions know nothing of, and cannot understand till they see it. He is the only poet or literary man we ever knew who puts us in mind of Sir John Suckling or Killigrew or Carew; or who united rare intellectual acquirements with outward grace and natural gentility. Mr. Hunt ought to have been a gentleman born, and to have patronised men of letters. He might then have played, and sung, and laughed, and talked his life away; have written manly prose, elegant verse; and his *Story of Rimini* would have been praised by Mr. Blackwood. As it is, there is no man now living who at the same time writes prose and verse so well, with the exception of Mr. Southey (an exception, we fear, that will be little palatable to either of these gentlemen). His prose writings, however, display more consistency of principle than the laureate's; his verses more taste. We will venture to oppose his Third Canto of the *Story of Rimini* for classic elegance and natural feeling to any equal number of lines from Mr. Southey's Epics or from Mr. Moore's Lalla Rookh. In a more gay and conversational style of writing, we think his *Epistle to Lord Byron* on his going abroad, is a masterpiece;—and the *Feast of the Poets* has run through several editions. A light, familiar grace, and mild unpretending pathos are the characteristics of his more sportive or serious writings, whether in poetry or prose. A smile plays round the sparkling features of the one; a tear is ready to start from the thoughtful gaze of the other. He perhaps takes too little pains, and indulges in too much wayward caprice in both. A wit and a poet, Mr. Hunt is also distinguished by fineness of tact and sterling sense: he has only been a visionary in humanity, the fool of virtue. What then is the drawback to so many shining qualities, that has made them useless, or even hurtful to their owner? His crime is, to have been Editor of

the *Examiner* ten years ago, when some allusion was made in it to the age of the present King, and though his Majesty has grown older, our luckless politician is no wiser than he was then!

ELIA, AND GEOFFREY CRAYON

So Mr. Charles Lamb and Mr. Washington Irvine choose to designate themselves; and as their lucubrations under one or other of these *noms de guerre* have gained considerable notice from the public, we shall here attempt to discriminate their several styles and manner, and to point out the beauties and defects of each in treating of somewhat similar subjects.

Mr. Irvine is, we take it, the more popular writer of the two, or a more general favourite: Mr. Lamb has more devoted, and perhaps more judicious partisans. Mr. Irvine is by birth an American, and has, as it were, *skimmed the cream*, and taken off patterns with great skill and cleverness, from our best known and happiest writers, so that their thoughts and almost their reputation are indirectly transferred to his page, and smile upon us from another hemisphere, like 'the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow': he succeeds to our admiration and our sympathy by a sort of prescriptive title and traditional privilege. Mr. Lamb, on the contrary, being 'native to the manner here,' though he too has borrowed from previous sources, instead of availing himself of the most popular and admired, has groped out his way, and made his most successful researches among the more obscure and intricate, though certainly not the least pithy or pleasant of our writers. Mr. Washington Irvine has culled and transplanted the flowers of modern literature, for the amusement of the general reader: Mr. Lamb has raked among the dust and cobwebs of a more remote period, has exhibited specimens of curious relics, and pored over moth-eaten, decayed manuscripts, for the benefit of the more inquisitive and discerning part of the public. Antiquity after a time has the grace of novelty, as old fashions revived are mistaken for new ones; and a certain quaintness and singularity of style is an agreeable relief to the smooth and insipid monotony of modern composition. Mr. Lamb has succeeded not by conforming to the *Spirit of the Age*, but in opposition to it. He does not march boldly along with the crowd, but steals off the pavement to pick his way in the contrary direction. He prefers *bye-ways* to *highways*. When the full tide of human life pours along to some festive show, to some pageant of a day, Elia would stand on one side to look over an old book-stall, or stroll down some deserted pathway in search of a pensive inscription over a

tottering doorway, or some quaint device in architecture, illustrative of embryo art and ancient manners. Mr. Lamb has the very soul of an antiquarian, as this implies a reflecting humanity; the film of the past hovers forever before him. He is shy, sensitive, the reverse of every thing coarse, vulgar, obtrusive, and *commonplace*. He would fain 'shuffle off this mortal coil,' and his spirit clothes itself in the garb of elder time, homelier, but more durable. He is borne along with no pompous paradoxes, shines in no glittering tinsel of a fashionable phraseology; is neither fop nor sophist. He has none of the turbulence or froth of new-fangled opinions. His style runs pure and clear, though it may often take an underground course, or be conveyed through old-fashioned conduit-pipes. Mr. Lamb does not court popularity, nor strut in gaudy plumes, but shrinks from every kind of ostentatious and obvious pretension into the retirement of his own mind.

'The self-applauding bird, the peacock see:—
Mark what a sumptuous pharisee is he!
Meridian sun-beams tempt him to unfold
His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold:
He treads as if, some solemn music near,
His measured step were governed by his ear:
And seems to say—'Ye meaner fowl, give place,
I am all splendour, dignity, and grace!'
Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,
Though he too has a glory in his plumes.
He, Christian-like, retreats with modest mien
To the close copse or far sequestered green,
And shines without desiring to be seen.'

These lines well describe the modest and delicate beauties of Mr. Lamb's writings, contrasted with the lofty and vain-glorious pretensions of some of his contemporaries. This gentleman is not one of those who pay all their homage to the prevailing idol: he thinks that

'New-born gauds are made and moulded of things past,'

nor does he

'Give to dust that is a little gilt
More laud than gilt o'er-dusted.'

His convictions 'do not in broad rumour lie,' nor are they 'set off to the world in the glistering foil' of fashion; but 'live and breathe aloft in those pure eyes, and perfect judgment of all-seeing *time*.' Mr. Lamb rather affects and is tenacious of the obscure and remote: of that which rests on its own intrinsic and silent merit; which scorns all alliance, or even the suspicion of owing any thing to noisy

clamour, to the glare of circumstances. There is a fine tone of *chiaro-scuro*, a moral perspective in his writings. He delights to dwell on that which is fresh to the eye of memory; he yearns after and covets what soothes the frailty of human nature. That touches him most nearly which is withdrawn to a certain distance, which verges on the borders of oblivion:—that piques and provokes his fancy most, which is hid from a superficial glance. That which, though gone by, is still remembered, is in his view more genuine, and has given more 'vital signs that it will live,' than a thing of yesterday, that may be forgotten to-morrow. Death has in this sense the spirit of life in it; and the shadowy has to our author something substantial in it. Ideas savour most of reality in his mind; or rather his imagination loiters on the edge of each, and a page of his writings recals to our fancy the *stranger* on the grate, fluttering in its dusky tenuity, with its idle superstition and hospitable welcome!

Mr. Lamb has a distaste to new faces, to new books, to new buildings, to new customs. He is shy of all imposing appearances, of all assumptions of self-importance, of all adventitious ornaments, of all mechanical advantages, even to a nervous excess. It is not merely that he does not rely upon, or ordinarily avail himself of them; he holds them in abhorrence, he utterly abjures and discards them, and places a great gulph between him and them. He disdains all the vulgar artifices of authorship, all the cant of criticism, and helps to notoriety. He has no grand swelling theories to attract the visionary and the enthusiast, no passing topics to allure the thoughtless and the vain. He evades the present, he mocks the future. His affections revert to, and settle on the past, but then, even this must have something personal and local in it to interest him deeply and thoroughly; he pitches his tent in the suburbs of existing manners; brings down the account of character to the few straggling remains of the last generation; seldom ventures beyond the bills of mortality, and occupies that nice point between egotism and disinterested humanity. No one makes the tour of our southern metropolis, or describes the manners of the last age, so well as Mr. Lamb—with so fine, and yet so formal an air—with such vivid obscurity, with such arch piquancy, such picturesque quaintness, such smiling pathos. How admirably he has sketched the former inmates of the South-Sea House; what 'fine fretwork he makes of their double and single entries!' With what a firm, yet subtle pencil he has embodied *Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist!* How notably he embalms a battered *beau*; how delightfully an amour, that was cold forty years ago, revives in his pages! With what well-disguised humour, he introduces us to his relations, and how freely he serves up his friends!

Certainly, some of his portraits are *fixtures*, and will do to hang up as lasting and lively emblems of human infirmity. Then there is no one who has so sure an ear for 'the chimes at midnight,' not even excepting Mr. Justice Shallow; nor could Master Silence himself take his 'cheese and pippins' with a more significant and satisfactory air. With what a gusto Mr. Lamb describes the inns and courts of law, the Temple and Gray's-Inn, as if he had been a student there for the last two hundred years, and had been as well acquainted with the person of Sir Francis Bacon as he is with his portrait or writings! It is hard to say whether St. John's Gate is connected with more intense and authentic associations in his mind, as a part of old London Wall, or as the frontispiece (time out of mind) of the Gentleman's Magazine. He haunts Watling-street like a gentle spirit; the avenues to the play-houses are thick with panting recollections, and Christ's-Hospital still breathes the balmy breath of infancy in his description of it! Whittington and his Cat are a fine hallucination for Mr. Lamb's historic Muse, and we believe he never heartily forgave a certain writer who took the subject of Guy Faux out of his hands. The streets of London are his fairy-land, teeming with wonder, with life and interest to his retrospective glance, as it did to the eager eye of childhood; he has contrived to weave its tritest traditions into a bright and endless romance!

Mr. Lamb's taste in books is also fine, and it is peculiar. It is not the worse for a little *idiosyncrasy*. He does not go deep into the Scotch novels, but he is at home in Smollet or Fielding. He is little read in Junius or Gibbon, but no man can give a better account of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, or Sir Thomas Brown's Urn-Burial, or Fuller's Worthies, or John Bunyan's Holy War. No one is more unimpressible to a specious declamation; no one relishes a recondite beauty more. His admiration of Shakespear and Milton does not make him despise Pope; and he can read Parnell with patience, and Gay with delight. His taste in French and German literature is somewhat defective; nor has he made much progress in the science of Political Economy or other abstruse studies, though he has read vast folios of controversial divinity, merely for the sake of the intricacy of style, and to save himself the pain of thinking. Mr. Lamb is a good judge of prints and pictures. His admiration of Hogarth does credit to both, particularly when it is considered that Leonardo da Vinci is his next greatest favourite, and that his love of the *actual* does not proceed from a want of taste for the *ideal*. His worst fault is an over-eagerness of enthusiasm, which occasionally makes him take a surfeit of his highest favourites.—Mr. Lamb excels in familiar conversation almost as much as in writing, when his

modesty does not overpower his self-possession. He is as little of a proser as possible; but he *blurts* out the finest wit and sense in the world. He keeps a good deal in the back-ground at first, till some excellent conceit pushes him forward, and then he abounds in whim and pleasantry. There is a primitive simplicity and self-denial about his manners; and a Quakerism in his personal appearance, which is, however, relieved by a fine Titian head, full of dumb eloquence! Mr. Lamb is a general favourite with those who know him. His character is equally singular and amiable. He is endeared to his friends not less by his foibles than his virtues; he insures their esteem by the one, and does not wound their self-love by the other. He gains ground in the opinion of others, by making no advances in his own. We easily admire genius where the diffidence of the possessor makes our acknowledgment of merit seem like a sort of patronage, or act of condescension, as we willingly extend our good offices where they are not exacted as obligations, or repaid with sullen indifference. —The style of the Essays of Elia is liable to the charge of a certain *mannerism*. His sentences are cast in the mould of old authors; his expressions are borrowed from them; but his feelings and observations are genuine and original, taken from actual life, or from his own breast; and he may be said (if any one can) 'to have coined his heart for *jests*,' and to have split his brain for fine distinctions! Mr. Lamb, from the peculiarity of his exterior and address as an author, would probably never have made his way by detached and independent efforts; but, fortunately for himself and others, he has taken advantage of the Periodical Press, where he has been stuck into notice, and the texture of his compositions is assuredly fine enough to bear the broadest glare of popularity that has hitherto shone upon them. Mr. Lamb's literary efforts have procured him civic honours (a thing unheard of in our times), and he has been invited, in his character of Elia, to dine at a select party with the Lord Mayor. We should prefer this distinction to that of being poet-laureat. We would recommend to Mr. Waithman's perusal (if Mr. Lamb has not anticipated us) the *Rosamond Gray* and the *John Woodvil* of the same author, as an agreeable relief to the noise of a City feast, and the heat of City elections. A friend, a short time ago, quoted some lines[1] from the last-mentioned of these works, which meeting Mr. Godwin's eye, he was so struck with the beauty of the passage, and with a consciousness of having seen it before, that he was uneasy till he could recollect where, and after hunting in vain for

[1] The description of sports in the forest:

'To see the sun to bed and to arise,
Like some hot amourist with glowing eyes,' &c.

it in Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and other not unlikely places, sent to Mr. Lamb to know if he could help him to the author!

Mr. Washington Irvine's acquaintance with English literature begins almost where Mr. Lamb's ends,—with the Spectator, Tom Brown's works and the wits of Queen Anne. He is not bottomed in our elder writers, nor do we think that he has tasked his own faculties much, at least on English ground. Of the merit of his *Knicker-bocker*, and New York stories, we cannot pretend to judge. But in his *Sketch-book* and *Bracebridge-Hall* he gives us very good American copies of our British Essayists and Novelists, which may be very well on the other side of the water, or as proofs of the capabilities of the national genius, but which might be dispensed with here, where we have to boast of the originals. Not only Mr. Irvine's language is with great taste and felicity modelled on that of Addison, Goldsmith, Sterne, or Mackenzie; but the thoughts and sentiments are taken at the rebound, and as they are brought forward at the present period, want both freshness and probability. Mr. Irvine's writings are literary *anachronisms*. He comes to England for the first time; and being on the spot, fancies himself in the midst of those characters and manners which he had read of in the Spectator and other approved authors, and which were the only idea he had hitherto formed of the parent country. Instead of looking round to see what *we are*, he sets to work to describe us as *we were*—at second hand. He has Parson Adams, or Sir Roger de Coverley in his '*mind's eye*'; and he makes a village curate or a country 'squire in Yorkshire or Hampshire sit to these admired models for their portraits in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Whatever the ingenious author has been most delighted with in the representations of books, he transfers to his port-folio, and swears that he has found it actually existing in the course of his observation and travels through Great Britain. Instead of tracing the changes that have taken place in society since Addison or Fielding wrote, he transcribes their account in a different hand-writing, and thus keeps us stationary, at least in our most attractive and praise-worthy qualities of simplicity, honesty, modesty, hospitality, and good-nature. This is a very flattering mode of turning fiction into history, or history into fiction; and we should scarcely know ourselves again in the softened and altered likeness, but that it bears the date of 1820, and issues from the press in Albemarle-street. This is one way of complimenting our national and Tory prejudices; and coupled with literal or exaggerated portraits of *Yankee* peculiarities, could hardly fail to please. The first Essay in the *Sketch-book*, that on national Antipathies, is the best; but after that, the sterling ore of wit or feeling

is gradually spun thinner and thinner, till it fades to the shadow of a shade. Mr. Irvine is himself, we believe, a most agreeable and deserving man, and has been led into the natural and pardonable error we speak of, by the tempting bait of European popularity, in which he thought there was no more likely method of succeeding than by imitating the style of our standard authors, and giving us credit for the virtues of our forefathers.

We should not feel that we had discharged our obligations to truth or friendship, if we were to let this volume go without introducing into it the name of the author of *Virginius*. This is the more proper, inasmuch as he is a character by himself, and the only poet now living that is a mere poet. If we were asked what sort of man Mr. Knowles is, we could only say, 'he is the writer of Virginius.' His most intimate friends see nothing in him, by which they could trace the work to the author. The seeds of dramatic genius are contained and fostered in the warmth of the blood that flows in his veins; his heart dictates to his head. The most unconscious, the most unpretending, the most artless of mortals, he instinctively obeys the impulses of natural feeling, and produces a perfect work of art. He has hardly read a poem or a play or seen any thing of the world, but he hears the anxious beatings of his own heart, and makes others feel them by the force of sympathy. Ignorant alike of rules, regardless of models, he follows the steps of truth and simplicity; and strength, proportion, and delicacy are the infallible results. By thinking of nothing but his subject, he rivets the attention of the audience to it. All his dialogue tends to action, all his situations form classic groups. There is no doubt that Virginius is the best acting tragedy that has been produced on the modern stage. Mr. Knowles himself was a player at one time, and this circumstance has probably enabled him to judge of the picturesque and dramatic effect of his lines, as we think it might have assisted Shakespear. There is no impertinent display, no flaunting poetry; the writer immediately conceives how a thought would tell if he had to speak it himself. Mr. Knowles is the first tragic writer of the age; in other respects he is a common man; and divides his time and his affections between his plots and his fishing-tackle, between the Muses' spring, and those mountain-streams which sparkle like his own eye, that gush out like his own voice at the sight of an old friend. We have known him almost from a child, and we must say he appears to us the same boy-poet that he ever was. He has been cradled in song, and rocked in it as in a dream, forgetful of himself and of the world!

The End of The Spirit of the Age.

PREFACE TO AN ABRIDGMENT OF ABRAHAM TUCKER'S LIGHT OF NATURE PURSUED

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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PREFACE TO AN ABRIDGMENT OF THE LIGHT OF NATURE PURSUED

THERE are two considerations which seem necessary to be attended to in abridging any author; the size of the work, rendering it inaccessible to the generality of readers, and the merit of the work, rendering it desirable that it should be within every one's reach. It is easy to perceive, that these two conditions are not always united: there are some works whose only merit seems to be, that they are so large that nobody can read them; whose ponderous bulk, and formidable appearance, happily serve as a barrier to keep out the infection of their dulness.

The work, of which the following is an abridgment, notwithstanding its excellence, has been little read. A philosophical work in seven large volumes presents no very great attractions to the indolent curiosity of most readers. Even the seven volumes of Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison, are at present viewed with doubtful looks by the eye of taste, and reluctantly engaged in: and our modern novelists, that happily privileged race of authors, whose works 'not sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,' are exempt from the charge of dulness or *ennui*, have been obliged to contract the boundless scenes of their imagination within four slender volumes, where the diminutive page vies in vain with the luxuriant margin. As to the studious and recluse reader, there is generally another obstacle which prevents him from gratifying his curiosity with respect to works of this extent, however valuable or important.

Again, there are works of great length, which cannot, however, be reduced into a less compass, 'without suffering loss and diminution.' Though vast, there is nothing useless, nothing superfluous in them; and nothing can be taken away or displaced, without destroying the symmetry and connection of the whole. This is certainly not the case with the writings of Abraham Tucker: they are encumbered and weighed down with a load of unnecessary matter. Not that there are any great inequalities in them, nor any parts which, taken separately, are not entertaining and valuable; but the work is swelled

out with endless repetitions of itself. The same thing is said over and over again; the same subjects discussed in a different shape, till the reader is tired, and his attention quite distracted. This radical defect, which is certainly a drawback on the usefulness of the work, appears evidently to have arisen from the manner of composing it. The author was a private gentleman, who wrote at his ease, and for his own amusement: he had nothing to do but to take his time, and follow the whim of the moment. He wrote without any regular plan, and without foreseeing or being concerned about the deviations, the shiftings and windings, and the intricate cross-movements in which he should be entangled. He had leisure on his hands; and provided he got out of the labyrinth at last, he was satisfied—no matter how often he had lost his way in it. When a subject presented itself to him, he exhausted all he had to say upon it, and then dismissed it for another. The chapter was thrown aside, and forgotten. If the same subject recurred again in a different connection, he turned it over in his thoughts afresh; as his ideas arose in his mind, he committed them to paper; he repeated the same things over again, or inserted any new observation or example that suggested itself to him in confirmation of his argument; and thus by the help of a new title, and by giving a different application to the whole, a new chapter was completed. By this means, as he himself remarks, his writings are rather a tissue of loose essays than a regular work; and indeed the leaves of the Sybils could not be more loose and unconnected. It is so far then from being an injury, that it must be rather an advantage to the original work to expunge its repetitions, and confine its digressions, if this could be done properly.

This is, in fact, what I have attempted to do: whenever I came to a passage that was merely a repetition of a former one, I struck it out: and at the same time, I endeavoured to abridge those detailed parts of the work which were the longest, and the least interesting, and to correct the general redundance of the style. I have not, however (that I know of), omitted any thing essential to the merit of the work. All the singular observations, all the fine illustrations, I have given nearly in an entire state to the reader: I was afraid to touch them, lest I should spoil them. The rule that I went by was, to give every thing that I thought would strike the attention in reading the work itself, and to leave out every thing (except what was absolutely necessary to the understanding of the subject), that would be likely to make no lasting impression on the mind. A good abridgment ought to contain just as much as we should wish to recollect of a book; it should give back (only in a more perfect manner) to a reader well acquainted with the original, 'the image of

his mind,' so that he would miss no favourite passage, none of the prominent parts, or distinguishing features of the work. How far I have succeeded, must be left to the decision of others: and perhaps in some respects one is less a judge of the execution of a work like this, than of an original performance. The same deception takes place here, as, I have been told by painters, sometimes happens in copying a fine picture. Your mind is full of the original, and you see the imitation through this borrowed medium; you transfuse its grace and spirit into the copy; you connect its glowing tints and delicate touches with a meagre outline, and a warm fancy sheds its lustre over that which is little better than a blank: but when the original impression is faded, and you have nothing left but the copy for the imagination to feed on, you find the spirit evaporated, the expression gone, and you wonder at your own mistake. I can only say, that I have done my best to prevent my copy of the Light of Nature from degenerating into a mere *caput mortuum*. As to the pains and labour it has cost me, or the time I have devoted to it, I shall say nothing. However, if any one should be scrupulous on that head, I might answer, as Sir Joshua Reynolds is said to have done to some person who cavilled at the price of a picture, and desired to know how long he had been doing it, 'All my life.'

Of the work itself, I can speak with more confidence. I do not know of any work in the shape of a philosophical treatise that contains so much good sense so agreeably expressed. The character of the work is, in this respect, altogether singular. Amidst all the abstruseness of the most subtle disquisitions, it is as familiar as Montaigne, and as wild and entertaining as John Buncle. To the ingenuity and closeness of the metaphysician, he unites the principal knowledge of the man of the world, and the utmost sprightliness, and even levity of imagination. He is the only philosopher who appears to have had his senses always *about him*, or to have possessed the enviable faculty of attending at the same time to what was passing in his own mind, and what was going on without him. He applied every thing to the purposes of philosophy; he could not see any thing, the most familiar objects or the commonest events, without connecting them with the illustration of some difficult problem. The tricks of a young kitten, or a little child at play, were sure to suggest to him some useful observation, or nice distinction. To this habit, he was, no doubt, indebted for what Paley justly calls 'his unrivalled power of illustration.' To be convinced that he possessed this power in the highest degree, it is only necessary to look into almost any page of his writings: at least, I think it impossible for any one not to perceive the beauty, the *naiveté*, the force, the clearness, and propriety of his

illustrations, who has not previously had his understanding strangely overlaid with logic and criticism.[1]—If he was surpassed by one or two writers in logical precision and systematic profundity, there is no metaphysical writer who is equal to him in clearness of apprehension, and a various insight into human nature. Though he excelled greatly in both, yet, he excelled more in what is called the method of induction, than that of analysis: he convinces the reader oftener by shewing him the thing in dispute, than by defining its abstract qualities; as the philosopher is said to have proved the existence of motion by getting up and walking. I do not, for my own part, look up with all that awe and admiration to the grave professors of abstract reasoning that it is usual to do. They are so far from being men of great comprehension of mind, (if by this we are to understand comprehending the whole of every subject) that the contrary is generally the case. They are persons of few ideas, of slow perceptions, of narrow capacities, of dull but retentive feelings, who cannot seize or enter into the infinite variety and rapid succession of natural objects, and are only susceptible of those impressions of things, which being common to all objects, and constantly repeated, come at length to fix those lasting traces in the mind, which nothing can ever alter or wear out. By attending only to one aspect of things, and that the same, and by leaving out always those minute differences and perplexing irregularities which disturb the sluggish uniformity of our ideas, and give life and motion to our being, men of formal understandings are sometimes able to pursue their inquiries with a steadiness and certainty that are incompatible with a more extensive range of thought. Abstraction is a trick to supply the defect of comprehension. The moulds of the understanding may be said not to be large enough to contain the gross concrete objects of nature, but will still admit of their names, and descriptions, and general forms, which lie flatter and closer in the brain, and are more easily managed. The most perfect abstraction is nothing more than the art of making use of only one half of the understanding, and never seeing more than one half of a subject, in the same manner as we find that those persons have the acutest perceptions, who have lost some one of their senses. A man, therefore, who disdains the use of common sense, and thinks to arrive at the highest point of philosophy, by thus denaturalizing his understanding, is like a person who should

[1] These persons who have been so long on the rack of incomprehensible theories and captious disputes, whose minds have been stretched on the Procrustes' bed of metaphysical systems, till they have acquired a horror of any thing like common sense or familiar expression, put me in mind of what is said of those who have been really put to the rack: they can bear their unnatural distorted state tolerably well; it is the return of sense and motion which is death to them.

deprive himself of the use of his eye-sight, in order that he might be able to grope his way better in the dark!

A man may set up for a system-maker, upon a single idea: he cannot write a sensible book without a great many. I do not deny that one idea may often involve, and be the parent of many others: but I do not see how knowledge is at all the worse, because it brings us immediately acquainted with the very form of truth, instead of serving merely as an index, or clue to direct us in the search of it. If the one method tends more effectually to sharpen the understanding, the other enriches it more. The one method puts you upon exerting your own faculties; the other, meeting you half way, wisely saves you from the necessity of taking all that pains and trouble in the search after truth, which few persons are disposed to take, and is therefore more generally useful. The great merit of our author's writings is undoubtedly that sound, practical, comprehensive good sense, which is to be found in every part of them. What is I believe the truest test of fine sense, is that affecting simplicity in his observations, which proceeds from their extreme truth and liveliness. Whatever recalls strongly to our remembrance the common feelings of human nature, and marks distinctly the changes that take place in the human breast, must always be accompanied with some sense of emotion; for our own nature can never be indifferent to us.

If there is any fault in his practical reasonings, it is that they are too discursive, and without a determinate object. No difficulty ever escapes his penetration; every view of his subject, every consequence of his principles is stated and examined with scrupulous exactness, and the weak sides and inconveniences of every rule are pointed out, till a sort of sceptical uncertainty is introduced, and the mind sinks into a passive indifference. This kind of reasoning is certainly not calculated to rouse the energy of our active powers; but I believe it is that which generally accompanies much dispassionate inquiry. I am afraid the most patient thinkers are those who have the most doubts and the fewest violent prejudices; and perhaps, after all, we shall be forced to acknowledge with Sterne, as the truest philosophy, 'that there is not so much difference between good and evil as the world are apt to imagine.' A writer, indeed, who has a system to support, is not likely to fall into this error; but then, if it is only because he has a system to support, what is the value of that confidence in his opinions, which is the result of wilful blindness? A man's living much in retirement (as was the case with our author) where his thoughts have a calm and even course to flow in, may also contribute much to this indecision of mind. There is many a champion who would soon sink into silent scepticism, if he was not

urged on by the necessity of maintaining opinions which he has once avowed, and had nobody to dispute against but himself. The spirit of contradiction is the great source of dogmatism and pertinacity of opinion. I am aware, that a habit of much disputing also produces the contrary effect. But even where it renders men sceptical, it does not render them candid. It is therefore in great cities, in literary clubs, that you meet with the fewest sincere opinions, and the most extravagant assertions.

As to his system of belief on the subject of religion, I am unable to say what it was: and perhaps he did not know himself. I have however no doubt, that he was sincere in his professions of attachment to the established doctrines, or that he was habitually accustomed to look upon them as true. Still there is a distinction, which is not always attended to, between that kind of assent which is merely habitual, or the effect of choice, which depends upon a disposition to regard any object in a certain point of view, and that internal conviction, in which the will has no concern, which is the result of a free and unbiassed judgment, and which a man retains in spite of himself. Subtle distinctions are not always the most palpable; and therefore sometimes require the aid of violent suppositions to render them intelligible. I can conceive, that a person may all his life live in the belief of a certain notion, without once suspecting the contrary; yet, that if the case could be put to him, to declare his opinion freely to the best of his judgment, for that, if he were mistaken, his life must answer for it, he would instantly find by what slender threads his former opinion hung. The sense of convenience, humour, or vanity, are sufficient to blind the understanding, and determine our opinions in speculative points, and matters of indifference. Common compliance, or good-nature, or personal regard, may lead them to give credit to, and defend the truth of a story told by a friend, which yet, if I were put to my oath, I could not do. So that we, in fact, very often believe that to be true, which we *know* to be false.[1] The atheist is no longer an atheist on a sickbed; and a violent thunderstorm has been known not only to clear the air, but to cure the freethinker of his affected scruples with respect to the proofs of a superintending Providence. But the difference of our conclusions in such cases does not arise from any new evidence, or farther investigation of the subject, but from the greater interest we have to examine carefully into the real state of our opinions, and to throw off all disguises that conceal them from

[1] How difficult do we find it, to believe that a person is telling us a falsehood, while we are with him, though we may at the same time be thoroughly convinced that this is the case.

ourselves. Now this ultimate test cannot very well be applied to a man's religious professions, because the power of denouncing 'pains and penalties' is already lodged in other hands; but I cannot help suspecting, that if this test could have been applied to some of our author's notions, his external and internal, or, to use his own expressions, his exoteric and esoteric creed, would not have been found to coalesce perfectly together. It is amusing to observe with what gravity he sets himself to inveigh against freethinkers and freethinking; when he himself, as to his mode of reasoning, is one of the greatest of freethinkers. He seems to have been willing to *keep the game* entirely in his own hands; or else to have supposed that the liberal exercise of reason was only proper for gentlemen of independent fortune; and that none but those who were in the commission of the peace, should be allowed to censure vulgar errors. This was certainly a weakness.

With respect to his metaphysical system, he must be considered as the founder of his own school; or at least, the opinions of different sects are so mingled up in him, that he cannot be considered as belonging to any party. He professes himself indeed, and seems anxious to be thought, a disciple of Locke, but this is evidently very much *against the grain*; and he is perpetually put to it to reconcile the differences between them on the most essential points.—I know but of two sorts of philosophy; that of those who believe what they feel, and endeavour to account for it, and that of those who only believe what they understand, and have already accounted for. The one is the philosophy of consciousness, the other that of experiment; the one may be called the intellectual, the other the material philosophy. The one rests chiefly on the general notions and conscious perceptions of mankind, and endeavours to discover what the mind is, by looking into the mind itself; the other denies the existence of every thing in the mind, of which it cannot find some rubbishly archetype, and visible image in its crucibles and furnaces, or in the distinct forms of verbal analysis. The first of these is the only philosophy that is fit for men of sense, the other should be left to chymists and logicians. Of this last kind is the philosophy of Locke; though I would be understood to speak of him rather as having laid the foundation, on which others have built absurd conclusions, than of what he was in himself. He was a man of much studious thought and reflection; and if everything by being carried to extremes, were not converted into abuse, his writings might have been of lasting service to his country and mankind. He staggered under the 'petrific mace' of Hobbes's philosophy, which he had not strength to resist, but yet he attempted

to make some stand; and was not quite overpowered by the gripe of that demon of the understanding. He took for his basis a bad simile, that the mind is like a blank sheet of paper, equally adapted to receive every kind of external impression. Or at least, if this illustration was proper for the purpose to which he applied it (which was to overturn the doctrine of innate ideas), a very bad use has been made of it since; as if it was meant to prove, that the mind is nothing in itself, nor the cause of any thing, never acting, but always acted upon, the mere receiver and passive instrument of whatever impressions are made upon it; so that being fairly *gutted* of itself, and of all positive qualities, it in fact resembles the bare walls and empty rooms of an unfurnished lodging, into which you bring whatever furniture you please; and which never contains any thing more than what is brought into it through the doors of the senses. Hence all those superadded feelings and ideas, all those operations and modifications which our impressions undergo from the active powers and independent nature of the mind itself, are treated as chimerical and visionary notions by the profound adepts in this clear-sighted philosophy.[1] The object of the German philosophy, or the system

[1] In this age of solid reason, it is always necessary to refer to particular examples, as it was formerly necessary to explain all hard words to the ladies. Condillac, in his Logic, that favourite manual of the modern sciolist, with admirable clearness proves, that our idea of virtue is a sensible image; because virtue implies a law, and that law must be written in a book, which must consist of letters, or figures of a certain shape, colour, and dimensions, which are real things, the objects of sense: that we are therefore right in asserting virtue to have a real existence, namely on paper, and in supposing that we have some idea of it, that is, as consisting of the letters of the alphabet. Mr. Horne Tooke, a man of wonderful wit, knowledge, and acuteness, but who, with my consent, shall not be empanelled as a juror to decide upon any question of abstruse reasoning, has endeavoured to explain away the whole meaning of language, by doing away its habitual or customary meaning, by denying that words have any meaning but what is derived to them from the umbilical root which first unites them to matter; and by making it out, that our thoughts having no life or motion in them, but as they are dragged about mechanically by words, are 'just such shard-born beetle things'

> 'As only buz to heav'n on ev'ning wings;
> Strike in the dark, offending but by chance;
> . . . . . .
> They know not beings, and but *bear* a name.'

Mr. Tooke's description of the formation of language * is a sort of pantomime or masquerade, where you see the trunks of our abstract ideas going about in search of their *heads*, or clumsily setting on their own *noses*, and afterwards pointing to them in answer to all questions: it reminds you of the island of Pantagruel (or some such place), where the men carry their heads before them

* See his account of the terminations head and ness, or nez.

of professor Kant, as far as I can understand it, is to explode this mechanical ignorance, to take the subject out of the hands of its present possessors, and to admit our own immediate perceptions to be some evidence of what passes in the human mind. It takes for granted the common notions prevalent among mankind, and then endeavours to explain them; or to shew their foundation in nature, and the universal relations of things. This, at least, is a modest proposal, and worthy of a philosopher. The understanding here pays a proper deference to the other parts of our being, and knows its own place: whereas our modern sophists, meddling, noisy, and self-sufficient, think that truth is only made to be disputed about; that it exists no where but in their experiments, demonstrations, and syllogisms; and leaving nothing to the silent operations of nature and common sense, believe that all our opinions, thoughts, and feelings, are of no value, till the understanding, like a pert commentator, comes forward to enforce and explain them; as if a book could be nothing without notes, or as if a picture had no meaning in

in their hands, or you would fancy that our author had lately been at the Promontory of noses. Andrew Paræus, on the solution of noses, was a novice to him. I am a little uneasy at this scheme of reducing all our ideas to points and solid substances. It is like the project to the philosopher, who contended that all the solid matter in the universe might be contained in a nutshell. This is ticklish ground to tread upon. At this rate, and if the proportion holds, each man will hardly have a single particle of understanding left to his share; and in two large quarto volumes, there may not perhaps be three grains of solid sense. Mr. Tooke, as a man of wit, may naturally wish to turn every thing to *point*. But this method will not hold in metaphysics: it is necessary to spin the thread of our ideas a little finer, and to take up with the flimsy texture of mental appearances. It is not easy to philosophize in solid epigrams, or explain abstruse questions by the tagging of points. I do not, however, mean to object to Mr. Tooke's etymological system as an actual history of language, but to that superficial gloss of philosophy which is spread over it, and to the whole of his logic: I might instance in the axiom, on which the whole turns, that 'it is as absurd to talk of a complex idea as of a complex star.' Now this and such like phrases had better have been left out: it is a good antithesis, but it is nothing more. Or if it had been put into the mouth of Sir Francis, who is a young man of lively parts, and then gravely answered by Mr. Tooke, it would have been all very well. But as it stands, it is injurious to the interests of philosophy, and an affront to common sense. Hartley proceeded a good way in making a dissected map of the brain; and did all he could to prove the human soul to consist of a white curd. After all, he was forced to confess, that it was impossible to get at the mind itself; and he was obliged to rest satisfied with having spent many years, and wasted immense ingenuity, in 'vicariously torturing and defacing' its nearest representative in matter. He was too great a man not to perceive the impossibility of ever reconciling matter and motion with the nature of thought; and he therefore left his system imperfect. But it fell into good hands, and soon had all its deficiencies supplied, and its doubts cleared up, to the entire satisfaction and admiration of all the dull, the superficial, and the ignorant.

it till it was pointed out by the connoisseur! Tucker was certainly an arrant truant from the system he pretends to adopt, and one of the common sense school. Thus he believed with professor Kant in the unity of consciousness, or 'that the mind alone is formative,' that fundamental article of the *transcendental* creed; in the immateriality of the soul, etc. His chapter on consciousness is one of the best in the whole work; and is perhaps as close an example of reasoning as is any where to be met with. I would recommend it to the serious perusal of all our professed *reasoners*, but that they are so thoroughly satisfied with the profession of the thing, so fortified and wrapped up in the mere name, that it is impossible to make any impression upon them with the thing itself. On some other questions, which form the great leading outlines of the two creeds, as that of self-love, for instance, his opinions seem to have been more unsettled and wavering. I have already offered what I have to say on this subject in a little work published by Mr. Johnson; and I shall therefore say the less about it here.[1] However, as I may not soon have an opportunity of recurring to the same subject, and as there is a part of that work with which I am not very well satisfied, the subject of which is also treated of in the following pages, it may not perhaps be altogether impertinent to add a few observations for the further clearing of it up.

We are told, that sympathy is only self-love disguised in another form, that it is a mere mechanical impulse or tendency to our own gratification. It is asked, Do we not attach ourselves to the idea of another's welfare, because it is pleasing to us, and do we not feel an aversion or dislike to certain objects, whether relating to ourselves or others, merely because they are disagreeable to us; and is not this self-love? I answer no. Because, in this logical way of speaking, it is a misnomer to call my attachment to any particular object or idea by a name that implies my attachment to a general principle, or to any thing beyond itself. Numerically and absolutely speaking, the particular idea or modification which produces any given action, is as much a distinct, individual, independent thing in nature, and has no more to do with myself, that is, with other objects, and ideas which have no immediate concern in producing it, than one individual has to do with another. The notion that our motives are blind mechanical impulses, if it proves anything, proves, that instead of being always governed by self-love, there is in reality no such thing. So that, as far as this argument goes, it is no less absurd to trace our love of others to self-love, than it would be to account for a man's love of reading from his fondness for bread and butter, or to

[1] Essay on Human Action.

say that his having an ear for music arose from his relish for port wine. It is therefore necessary to suppose, that when we attempt to resolve all our motives into self-love, we only mean to refer them to a certain class, and to say, that they all agree in having some circumstance in common which brings them under the same general denomination. Now, there is one way in which this has been attempted, by proving that they are all *ours*, that they all belong to the same being, and are therefore all equally selfish. This is as bad as Soame Jenyns's argument, that all men may be said to be born equal, because they are equally born. So, if it is contended, that sympathy is a part of our nature, and therefore selfish; that the imagination and understanding are real efficient causes of action, and therefore operate mechanically; that our ideas of all external existences, of other persons, their names, qualities and feelings, are only impressions existing in our own minds, and are therefore properly selfish, and ought to be called so; I shall have nothing to object to this kind of reasoning, but that it is taking a great deal of perverse pains to no purpose. The question stands just where it did, it is not moved a jot further. For what difference can be made in the question, by our calling benevolence selfishness, or sympathy self-love, I cannot discover, except that we should lose the advantage of having a distinct word to express those affections and feelings which confessedly have nothing to do with sympathy. The question therefore is, whether all our affections are of this latter class, or whether the two words do not express a distinction which has no real foundation in nature. This is in fact what must be meant by saying that sympathy is self-love in disguise; for this must imply that sympathy does not operate as such, that it is only the ostensible motive, the accidental circumstance, the form or vehicle that serves to transmit the efficacy of another principle lying hid beneath it, and that has no power but what it derives from its connection with something else. But, in order to establish this mechanical theory of self-love, it appears to me necessary to exhibit sympathy as it were abstracted from itself, to resolve it into another principle, and to shew that it would still produce exactly the same effects as it does at present. Now there are two ways in which I can conceive that this might be satisfactorily made out, viz. if it could be shewn, first, that our concern for others only affects the mind as connected with physical or bodily uneasiness; or, 2ndly, as abstract uneasiness. Suppose, for instance, that the imaginary feeling of what other persons suffer, as far as it is confined to the mind only, does not affect me at all, or produce the least disposition in my mind or wish to relieve them, but that the idea of what they suffer gives me a pain

in the head, or produces an uneasiness at my stomach, and that then, for the first time, I begin to feel some concern for them, and try to relieve them, in order to get rid of my own uneasiness, because I do not like the head-ach or the stomach-ach; this, I grant, would not entitle me to the character of much disinterestedness, but however I might attempt to gloss the matter over by an affectation of sensibility, and make a virtue of necessity, would be downright, unequivocal selfishness. This first supposition, however, is not true. To prove this, I need only appeal to every one's own breast, or at least to our observation of human nature; for it must be clear to every person, in one or other of these ways, that our interest in the pleasures and pains of others is not excited in the manner here described. Besides, how should the mind communicate an uneasiness to the body, which it does not feel itself? We must therefore have recourse to the second supposition for resolving benevolence into a mere mechanical principle, or shewing that it is at bottom the same with, and governed by the same laws as our most selfish impulses. There is no contradiction in supposing, that however great a disposition there might be in the mind to be immediately affected by the pleasures and pains of others, yet the impression made upon us by them might be nothing more than a mere abstract sensation of pleasure or pain, a simple detached or insulated feeling, existing by itself, and operating as a motive to action no further than the individual was concerned, or than he was affected by it as a positive, momentary thing. This would still be a mechanical and selfish feeling. Compassion would in this case be an immediate repugnance or aversion of the mind to an actual impression, and a disposition to take the shortest way to escape from it, every thing else being a matter of perfect indifference. This account supposes the particles of individual feeling to be as it were drawn off by some metaphysical process, and thus disengaged from the lifeless unsubstantial forms, to which they were attached, to bend their whole force to remove every thing that may cause the least disturbance or detriment to the mind to which they belong. You must believe, on this hypothesis, that our gross material desires setting themselves free from the airy yoke of fancy, tend directly to the centre of self-interest, as the lead and iron work, when once disengaged from the body of the ship, no longer float on the surface of the water, borne about by the winds, but sink at once to the bottom. But I have already shewn at large, and the reader may easily perceive, that this description of the manner in which our motives operate, has not the least foundation in nature. Our ideas and feelings act in concert. The will cannot act without ideas, nor otherwise than as it is directed by them. The mind is not so loosely constructed, as

that the different parts can disengage themselves at will from the rest of the system, and follow their own separate impulses. It is governed by many different springs united together, and acting in subordination to the same conscious power. It is formed, that if it could only wish to get rid of its own immediate uneasiness, it could never get rid of it at all, because it could not *will* the necessary means for that purpose, and would be perpetually tormented by ideal causes of pain, without being able to exert itself to remove them. The sore part might shrink, but the hand would not be stretched out to remove the object that irritated it. Without allowing an elastic power to the understanding; a power of collecting and concentrating its forces in any direction that seems necessary; and without supposing that our ideas have a power to act as relative representative things, connected together in a certain regular order, and not as mere simple pleasure and pain; the will would be entirely useless: indeed, there could be no such thing as volition, either with respect to our own affairs or those of others. But the fact is, that our ideas of certain things are interwoven into the finer texture of the mind, in a certain order and connection, as closely as the things themselves are joined in nature; and if, as they exist and are perceived there, they are true and efficient causes of action, I see no reason for asserting that they act mechanically, when, by this expression, if we affix any distinct idea to it, we must mean something entirely different; nor for ascribing those actions and motives to self-love, which neither take their rise from, nor are directed by, nor end in securing the exclusive interest of the individual as a numerical unit, a mere solitary existence. As the idea which influences the mind is not a detached idea starting up of its own accord, but an idea connected with other ideas and circumstances, presented involuntarily to the mind, and which cannot be separated from one another, or the whole of them banished from our thoughts, without overturning the foundation of all our habits of judging and reasoning, and deranging the understanding itself; it follows that the object of the mind, as an intelligent and rational agent, must be, not to remove the idea itself immediately as it is impressed on itself, but to remove those associated feelings and ideas which connect it with the world of external nature; that is, to make such an alteration in the relation of external objects, as, according to the necessary connection between certain objects and certain ideas, can alone produce the desired effect upon the mind. Our mechanical, and voluntary motives are not therefore the same, and it is absurd to attempt to reduce them under the same law. They do not move in concentric spheres, but are like the opposite currents of a river running many different ways at

the same time. The springs that give birth to our social affections are, by means of the understanding, as much regulated by the feelings of others, as if they had a real communication and sympathy with them, and are swayed by an impulse that is altogether foreign to self-love.

But to return to my author: it may be expected that I should point out some of those parts of the work which I think the most excellent. I have already mentioned the chapter on the nature of consciousness. That on the necessary connection of our motives is equally admirable for the clearness and closeness of the reasoning, though he afterwards, somehow or other, unaccountably deserts his own doctrine. Among the chapters on subjects of morality, some of those, which I have entitled miscellaneous, are perhaps the best, as those on vanity, education, death, etc. The last of these, I have sometimes conceived, has a resemblance, in a certain peculiar style of reasoning, in which truth and sophistry are artfully blended together, to Cicero's beautiful little treatise on Old Age; and, setting aside the exquisite polish of style, and gracefulness of the manner, in which it would be ridiculous to make any comparison with that elegant writer, I think the advantage is clearly on the side of our author, in ingenuity and richness of illustration.[1] But he has taken his boldest and most successful flight, in what he calls the Vision; this is the most singular part of the work, and that by which our author's reputation as a man of genius must stand or fall. I have given it with care, and more at large than any other part. The best things in it are his meeting with his wife, and the lecture delivered by Pythagoras.

Had our author been a vain man, his situation would not have been an enviable one. Even the sternest stoic of us all wishes at least for some person to enter into his views and feelings, and confirm him in the opinion he entertains of himself. But he does not seem to have had his spirits once cheered by the animating cordial of friendly sympathy. Discouraged by his friends, neglected by the public, and ridiculed by the reviewers, he still drew sufficient encouragement from the testimony of his own mind, and the inward consciousness of truth. He still pursued his inquiries with the same calmness and industry, and entered into the little round of his amusements with

[1] There is one argument in defence of Old Age, in Cicero, which is so exquisitely put, that nothing can surpass it: it is a perfect *bon bouche* for a metaphysician. It is where some one objects to old age, that the old man, whatever comforts he may enjoy, cannot hope to live long, which the young man at least expects to do. To which is answered; So much the better; the one has already done what the other only hopes to do: the old man has already lived long: the young man only hopes that he may. A man would be happy a whole day after having such a thought as this.

the same cheerfulness as ever. He rested satisfied with the enjoyment of himself, and of his own faculties; and was not disgusted with his simple employments, because this made no noise in the world. He did not seek for truth as the echo of loud folly; and he did not desist from the exercise of his own reason, because he could make no impression on ignorance and vulgarity. He could contemplate the truth by its own clear light, without the aid of the false lustre and glittering appearance which it assumes in the admiring eyes of the beholders. He sought for his reward, where only the philosopher will find it, in the secret approbation of his own heart, and the clear convictions of an enlightened understanding. The man of deep reflection is not likely to gain much popular applause; and he does not stand in need of it. He has learned to live upon his own stock, and can build his self-esteem on a better foundation than that of vanity. I cannot help mentioning, that though Mr. Tucker was blind when he wrote the last volumes of his work, which he did with a machine contrived by himself, he has not said a word of this circumstance: this would be with me a sufficient trait of his character.

The Author of An Essay on The Principles of Human Action.

PREFACE TO A NEW AND IMPROVED GRAMMAR OF THE ENGLISH TONGUE

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Published in one volume 12mo in 1810 (xvii. + 205 pp.) with the following title-page: 'A new and improved Grammar of the English Tongue: for the use of Schools In which the Genius of our Speech is especially attended to And the Discoveries of Mr. Horne Tooke and other Modern Writers on the Formation of Language are, for the first time incorporated By William Hazlitt. Author of an Essay on the Principles of Human Action etc. etc. etc. To which is added A new Guide to the English Tongue In a letter to Mr. W. F. Mylius, Author of the School Dictionary, By Edward Baldwin, Esq. London: Printed for M. J. Godwin, at the Juvenile Library, No. 41, Skinner Street; And to be had of all Booksellers. 1810.' The volume was printed by Richard Taylor and Co., Shoe-Lane, London.

PREFACE TO A NEW AND IMPROVED GRAMMAR OF THE ENGLISH TONGUE

It is a circumstance which may at first excite some surprise, that, amidst the various improvements in books of modern education, there has hitherto been no such thing as a real English Grammar. Those which we have are little else than translations of the Latin Grammar into English. We shall, however, no longer wonder at this circumstance, when we recollect that the Latin Grammar was regularly taught in our schools several centuries before any attempt was made to introduce the study of the mother-tongue; and that even since some attention has been paid to the latter, the study of the learned languages still having the precedence, our first notions of grammar are necessarily derived from them. Those who have written on the subject have not been exempt from the influence of early prejudice, and instead of correcting the error, have strengthened it.

The following is an attempt to explain the principles of the English language, such as it really is. We have endeavoured to admit no distinctions, which, but for our acquaintance with other languages, we should never have suspected to exist. The common method of teaching English grammar by transferring the artificial rules of other languages to our own, not only occasions much unnecessary trouble and perplexity; but by loading the memory with mere technical formalities, accustoms the mind to one of the worst habits that can be,—that of mistaking words for things, and of admitting a distinction without a difference. We might here refer particularly to the accounts given, in the most approved and popular grammars, of the genders, and the objective case of English nouns, that is, of a case without any difference of termination, and of genders without any mark denoting sex, &c. &c. In this respect the French seem to have much the advantage of us; as their grammars are, generally speaking, real descriptions of their language, not a fanciful and laboured account of what has no where any existence.

It is now above twenty years since Mr. Horne Tooke published

his celebrated work on grammar, called the Diversions of Purley. Though this has produced a very important change in the theory of language, no notice has been taken of it by grammarians in their definitions of the Parts of Speech, or in that branch of grammar which usurps the name of Etymology—an almost inexcusable neglect in those whose professed business it was to instruct others in the nature and origin of language. It is the object of the following compilation to take advantage of the discoveries contained in that work, without adopting its errors.[1]

The soundest and most useful parts of Mr. T.'s system, are his researches into the origin of indeclinable words, and we have engrafted the result of most of these into our little work, so far at least as to make the subject intelligible to the learner, though if we have merely excited his curiosity, we shall not have entirely failed in our object.

The practical rules and observations in the following work are almost entirely selected from other works of the same kind: if it should be thought to have any advantage over them, it must be chiefly in the theoretical and logical part. We shall here therefore present the reader with a short general view of the subject, to enable him to judge in what we differ from others, and whether it is for the better or worse.

It is common to suppose that the parts of speech, or different sorts of words, relate to different sorts of things or ideas; and that it was to express this difference in the subject-matter of discourse,

[1] Mr. Tooke has fallen into the same mistake with which he reproaches preceding writers, that of supposing the different sorts of words to be the measure of the different sorts of things. He has only reversed their inference: for as the old grammarians, who admitted more different sorts of words, contended for more differences of things, so Mr. Tooke, who admits of fewer sorts of words, argues that there can be only as many different ideas or things, as are expressed by the different parts of speech. Thus, if substantives and adjectives do not represent substance and quality, there can be no such difference in nature, or in the human understanding. This we conceive to be a piece of as false philosophy, as if we were to affirm that there can be no difference between blue or yellow, because they are both adjectives, or between light and sound, because they are both substantives. Mr. Tooke's whole object is to show that the different parts of speech do not relate to the differences in ideas or things, and yet he would make the difference in the one, the test of the difference in the other. As to all that he has said of abstraction, and the real or physical meaning of words, we believe that we do not understand him; for, as far as we do, his facts and cases seem to us to prove the very reverse of his conclusions. So he has brought 2000 instances of the meaning of words to demonstrate that we have no abstract ideas, not one of which 2000 meanings is any thing else but an abstract idea. Logic and metaphysics are the weak sides of his reasoning. But he has rendered essential services to grammar, which cannot be overlooked or forgotten.

that one class of words was originally appropriated to one class of things, and another to another. We have endeavoured to show on the contrary, that the grammatical distinctions of words do not relate to the nature of the things or ideas spoken of, but to our manner of speaking of them, *i.e.* to the particular point of view in which we have occasion to consider them, or combine them with others in the same discourse. The difference between a substantive and an adjective for instance, does not depend on the intrinsical nature of the object we think or speak of, but on its being that concerning which we affirm something, or that which we affirm of it. So if we say that snow is white, snow, the name of the subject of discourse, is a substantive, and white, the name of the quality we attribute to it, is an adjective, not because snow is a substance, and white a quality, for we may speak of a snowy mountain, or say that whiteness is hurtful to the eyes, when these words will change their character, though the things themselves cannot. The things themselves do not change, but it is we who view them in a different connection with other things, and who accordingly use different sorts of words to show the difference of the situation which they occupy in our thoughts and discourse.

The article is generally left quite unexplained, a mere anomaly in language. We have endeavoured to show that it is either the numeral adjective (*un*, one) or that it belongs to the same class with the demonstrative pronouns, *this*, *that*, &c.

A substantive had been generally supposed to be a word expressing a real thing or substance, as A man, a tree, a house, &c. It was however found that this definition would exclude many words from being substantives, which are universally allowed to be so; for example, all words expressing qualities, actions, abstract ideas, &c. &c. such as, Whiteness, conquest, kingdom, virtue. The only definition which in common grammars has been substituted for this circumscribed one is as much too loose and general: for a substantive is defined by Lowth, Murray, &c., to be the name of any thing that exists, or of which we can form any notion. So that all words, *i.e.* all signs of our ideas, must be substantives. We believe that a substantive is neither the name of a thing, nor the name of a substance, but the name of a substance or of any other thing or idea, considered as it is in itself, or as a distinct individual. That is, it is not the name of a thing really subsisting by itself (according to the old definition), but of a thing *considered* as subsisting by itself. So if we speak of *white* as a circumstance or quality of snow, it is an adjective; but if we abstract the idea of *white* from the substance to which it belongs, and consider this colour as it really is in itself, or as a

distinct subject of discourse, it then becomes a substantive, as in the sentence, White or whiteness is hurtful to the sight.

Adjectives are constantly defined as if they were the names of certain qualities, and of no other class of ideas. It is evident from what has been said that this definition is fallacious. We speak of a *stony* road, a *golden* mountain, a *leather* girdle, where the words marked in italics, and which refer to the substance of which a thing is made, not to its qualities, are confessedly adjectives. Any idea or thing, considered as a circumstance belonging to or connected with another, may be an adjective. An adjective therefore differs from a substantive, not from its expressing some *quality* of a substance, but from its expressing any thing that is affirmed of or connected with another, to wit, its quality, number, form, size, substance, situation, &c. &c., as may be seen in the instances, A *white* horse, A *tenth* part, A *round* table, A *small* book, An *iron* crown, A *sea* port. On the other hand, the characteristic difference between the adjective and the verb is, that the former expresses something that is usually known to belong to a thing, or which is taken for granted as a circumstance belonging to it; whereas the latter or the verb expresses something not usually belonging to a thing, or known to make a part of it, and which therefore forms the subject of a distinct proposition. The use of the adjective is to describe or define the subject of discourse, that of the verb to *mark* any addition which the speaker wishes to make to it, or any circumstance respecting it which it is his immediate object to enforce upon the hearer. So if we speak of a '*poisonous* plant,' we take for granted the connection between the subject and the attribute as a thing of course, or as already understood; but if we say, 'hemlock *poisons*, or *is poisonous*,' we then distinguish this connection of ideas as one which we suppose the hearer to be ignorant of, or which we particularly wish to recal to his attention.

We have been led unintentionally in speaking of the adjectives to anticipate our account of the verb. Nothing can be more vague, unsatisfactory and confused than the definition commonly given of the last, namely, that it is a word signifying To be, To do, or To suffer. From this definition the student may be tempted to suppose that Being, Doing, and Suffering are three particular classes of ideas, which are always expressed by the verb, and by no other part of speech. Let us examine how far this is the case. To love, then, is a verb, because it expresses Being, Doing, or Suffering. Love (the substantive) is not a verb, and yet it surely expresses either Being, Doing, or Suffering. Battle, Conquest, &c., are the names of actions, yet they are not verbs, but substantives. Active, Hasty, Cowardly, are adjectives, all of them expressing Action, Suffering,

Being, or a state of being. In fact, those who have made and adopted this definition, have sheltered its weakness under an ambiguous form of expression. If they had said that a verb is a word signifying Being, Doing, or Suffering, their account would not have been admitted. The prefix of the infinitive mood (To be, To do, &c.) is the only resemblance which the definition has to the subject. Instead of defining the verb, they make use of one. It remains however to show in what respect To Be, To Do, and To Suffer differ from Being, Doing, and Suffering. It cannot be in the subject-matter, or the ideas themselves, for these are the same.

Some persons have confined the signification of the verb to action. See Introduction to an Analytical Dictionary by David Booth. But this hypothesis, which is more determinate than the other, and at least aims at a meaning, is hardly tenable. The verb To Be does not express action. To belong to, To possess, To contain, To extend over, &c., do not express action, *i.e.* motion or change. Not to say that other classes of words, as nouns and adjectives, express action as well as verbs, as we have shown above. It would be better to say that a verb expresses some fact or event, that is to say, Being, Doing, or Suffering, as distinguished from a state of Being, Doing, or Suffering. But neither do all verbs express a single act or instance of a thing. When we say Two and two make four, we do not mean they do so in a single instance, but always. It is true, however, that verbs oftener express what happens to a thing, than what belongs to it, and that they do not express any proposition more generally than the nature of the subject requires. They make any thing known in a more marked and pointed, and therefore in a more limited manner. This secondary quality in the verb, however, seems to form the chief distinction between the participle and the adjective. Those indeed who make the participle an essential part of the verb, must adopt the definition here referred to, *viz.* that a verb is a word signifying a single, not a general attribution of one thing to another, or the actually being, doing, or suffering any thing, as distinct from a state of being, doing, or suffering. If we were to adopt any other definition of the verb than the one we have inserted, it would certainly be this. But we think it more consistent both with the particular meaning of words, and with the logic of grammar, to divide adjectives and verbs into words intended to express a *given*, or known connection between our ideas, and words intended to communicate a new or unknown one, than into words representing a continued connection between the subject and the attribute, and an accidental or momentary one.

We shall here just notice by the way the very unsatisfactory account of active and passive verbs given by grammarians. A verb

is active, they say, when it denotes the doing of an action, passive when it denotes the receiving one. The words *To receive a blow* will upon this principle signify the doing of an action, and to say *that an action is performed* will signify the receiving one. In fact the notion of agency or passiveness has no necessary connection with the active and passive forms of verbs. For an attempt to explain this subject, we refer to the grammar itself.

A pronoun is a general term to express an individual. Thus by the words He, she, it, I, you, &c., we mean that particular person or thing, which occupies a certain situation in the discourse, the person speaking, or the person spoken to, &c. A pronoun is literally a word used instead of, or which supplies the place of a noun, because instead of mentioning the name of the individual, we only refer to it by some known circumstance of situation which ascertains the object we mean. Pronouns are therefore adjectives defining some circumstance of a thing, and put absolutely.

Adverbs are for the most part words expressing the circumstance, manner, degree, &c., of an action, or attribute. Some of them, however, as the words No, Yes, are properly abbreviations of whole sentences, that is, convey assent to or dissent from an entire proposition. The last of these words is in fact the French verb, *Ouis*, *I hear*, used as an indeclinable term, that is, a term having a definite sense and meaning like declinable words, but not varied to adapt it to different situations, because it is restricted by custom to a particular application. The same account may be given of the other indeclinable words. Prepositions and conjunctions are either nouns or verbs expressing certain ideas like other nouns and verbs, but which are now used only for a particular purpose, and in a particular manner; that is to say, they are abruptly inserted between other words or sentences to join them together, and point out some such abstract relation between them as is implied in the original words themselves. So when we say All except John, we do not mean to address ourselves formally to any person who is to except or leave out John, though the preposition Except is undoubtedly the imperative mood of the same verb. We merely mean to convey the abstract idea, that John is to be excepted from the observation we have made, or that what is true of the others is not true of him. So the word From is a noun originally signifying Beginning, and now inserted before another noun to point it out as the source, cause, or first instance of any thing: as He speaks *from* (source) inspiration, or inspiration being the *cause* of his speaking. Interjections are the last class of indeclinable words, and they admit of a similar explanation. For they are merely words, conveying some sudden burst of

passion, and left standing by themselves without any regular connection with the rest of the discourse. We also give an interjectional form to half sentences, when we are hurried on by passion into the middle of what we mean to express without making any preparation, as 'Oh virtue! how amiable thou art! *i.e. I cannot express* how amiable thou art.'

We have thus gone through the different parts of the subject, in order to enable those who are conversant in such questions, to judge at one view of the merits or demerits of our plan. It is, we confess, a little different from others. But those, whose time is chiefly occupied in learning grammar, whether Latin or English, are not very strongly prejudiced in favour of established systems. The imperfections of those systems are obvious and unquestionable; and therefore an assiduous endeavour to improve upon them, and to place the fundamental articles of grammatical knowledge on a clearer and more intelligible footing without implicitly subscribing to error and absurdity merely because they are old, can scarcely fail to be received with favour, and examined with fairness, by competent judges.

NOTES

NOTES

A REPLY TO THE ESSAY ON POPULATION

Thomas Robert Malthus's (1766-1834) *Essay on the Principle of Population as it affects the Future Improvement of Society* was published anonymously in 1798. The second edition 'very much enlarged' appeared with the author's name in a large 4to volume in 1803. For a sketch of Malthus's life and doctrine and of the Malthusian controversy, see Sir Leslie Stephen's *The English Utilitarians*, II. 137-185 and 238-259. The references in the following notes are to the second (1803) edition of the Essay. Cf. Hazlitt's essay on Malthus in *The Spirit of the Age*, *ante*, pp. 287-298, and the last five essays in *Political Essays*, vol. III. pp. 356-385. A paper by De Quincey, entitled 'Malthus,' in the *London Magazine* for Oct. 1823, led to a brief controversy between De Quincey and Hazlitt, the particulars of which will be found in De Quincey's *Works* (ed. Masson), IX. pp. 3, 20-31. Hazlitt's *Reply to Malthus* was reviewed in the *Edinburgh Review* for August 1810 (vol. XVI. p. 464), or rather, as Hazlitt complains, the title of his *Reply* was prefixed to an article in the *Edinburgh* 'as a pretence for making a formal eulogy' on Malthus's work. Hazlitt thereupon wrote the following letter to Cobbett's *Political Register* (Nov. 24, 1810, vol. XVIII. p. 1014) under the heading 'Mr. Malthus and the Edinburgh Reviewers':—

'SIR,—The title-page of a pamphlet which I published some time ago, and part of which appeared in the Political Register in answer to the Essay on Population, having been lately prefixed to an article in the Edinburgh Review as a pretence for making a formal eulogy on that work, I take the liberty to request your insertion of a few queries, which may perhaps bring the dispute between Mr. Malthus's admirers and his opponents, to some sort of issue. It will, however, first of all be proper to say something of the article in the Review. The writer of the article accuses the 'anonymous' writer of the reply to the Essay, of misrepresenting and misunderstanding his author, and undertakes to give a statement of the real principles of Mr. Malthus's work. He at the same time informs us for whom this statement is intended, namely, for those who are not likely even to read the work itself, and who take their opinions on all subjects moral, political, and religious, from the periodical reports of the Edinburgh Review. For my own part, what I have to say will be addressed to those who have read Mr. Malthus's work, and who may be disposed to form some opinion of their own on the subject.—The most remarkable circumstance in the Review is, that it is a complete confession of the force of the arguments which have been brought against the Essay. The defence here set up of it may indeed be regarded as the euthanasia of that performance. For in what does this defence consist but in an adoption, point by point, of the principal objections and limitation, which have been offered to Mr. Malthus's system; and which being thus ingeniously applied to gloss its defects, the Reviewer charges those who had pointed them out with misrepresenting and vilifying the author? In fact, the advocates of this celebrated work do not at present defend its doctrines, but deny them. The only resource left them is that of screening its

fallacies from the notice of the public by raising a cry of misrepresentation against those who attempt to expose them, and by holding a mask of flimsy affectation over the real and distinguishing features of the work. Scarcely a glimpse remains of the striking peculiarities of Mr. Malthus's reasoning, his bold paradoxes dwindle by refined gradations into mere harmless commonplaces, and what is still more extraordinary, an almost entire coincidence of sentiment is found to subsist between the author of the essay and his most zealous opponents, if the ignorance and prejudices of the latter would but allow them to see it. Indeed the Edinburgh Reviewer gives pretty broad hints that neither friends nor foes have ever understood much of the matter, and kindly presents his readers for the first time, with the true key to this much admired production. He accordingly proceeds with considerable self-complacency to translate the language of the essay into the dialect of the Scotch school of economy, to put quite on one side the author's geometrical and arithmetical ratios, which had wrought such wonders, to state that Mr. Malthus never pretended to make any new discovery, and to quote a passage from Adam Smith, which suggested the plan of his work; to shew that this far-famed work which has been so idly magnified, and so unjustly decried as overturning all the commonly received axioms of political philosophy, proves absolutely nothing with respect to the prospects of mankind or the means of social improvement, that the sole hopes either of the present or of future generations do not centre (strange to tell!) in the continuance of vice and misery, but in the gradual removal of these, by diffusing rational views of things and motives of action, and particularly by ameliorating the condition, securing the independence, and raising the spirit, of the lower classes of society; and finally that both the extent of population, and the degree of happiness enjoyed by the people of any country depend very much upon, and, as far as there is any difference observable between one country or state of society and another, are wholly regulated by political institutions, a good or bad government, moral habits, the state of civilization, commerce, or agriculture, the improvements in art or science, and a variety of other causes quite distinct from the sole mechanical principle of population. And, this Sir, is what the Reviewer imposes on his unsuspecting readers as the sum and substance, the true scope and effect of Mr. Malthus's reasoning. It is in truth an almost literal recapitulation of the chief topics insisted on in the Reply to the Essay, which the Reviewer seems silently to regard as a kind of necessary supplement to that work.—In this account it is evident, both that Mr. Malthus's pretentions as an original discoverer are given up by the Reviewer, and that his obnoxious and extravagant conclusions are carefully suppressed. Now with regard to the general principle of the disproportion between the power of increase in population, and in the means of subsistence, and the necessity of providing some checks, moral or physical, to the former, in order to keep it on a level with the means of subsistence, I have never in any instance called in question either of "these important and radical facts," which it is the business of Mr. M.'s work to illustrate. All that I undertook in the Reply to the Essay was to disprove Mr. Malthus's claim to the discovery of these facts, and to shew that he had drawn some very false and sophistical conclusions from them, which do not appear in the article in the Review. As far therefore as relates to the Edinburgh Reviewers, and their readers, I might consider my aim as accomplished, and leave Mr. Malthus's system and pretensions in the hands of these friendly critics, who will hardly set the seal of their authority—on either one or the other, till they have reduced both to something like their own ordinary standard. But against this I have several reasons. First, as I never looked upon Mr. Malthus as "a man of no mark or likelihood,"[1] I should be sorry to see him dandled into insig-

[1] 'A fellow of no mark nor likelihood,' *Henry IV.*, Part I., Act III. Scene 2.

nificance, and made a mere puppet in the hands of the Reviewers. Secondly, I in some measure owe it to myself to prove that the objections I have brought against his system are not the phantoms of my own imagination. Thirdly, Mr. Malthus's work cannot be considered as entirely superseded by the account of it in the Review, as there are, no doubt, many persons who will still take their opinion of Mr. Malthus's doctrines from his own writings, and abide by what they find in the text as good authority and sound argument, though not sanctioned in the Commentary.—I will therefore proceed to put the questions I at first proposed as the best means I can devise for determining, both what the contents of Mr. Malthus's work really are, and to what degree of credit they are entitled, or how far they are true or false, original or borrowed.'

The queries which follow were with a few alterations republished by Hazlitt in *The Examiner* (Oct. 29, 1815—The *Round Table*, No. 23) and in *Political Essays* (vol. III. pp. 381-5). The alterations are almost entirely confined to the omission of all reference to the *Edinburgh Review*, for which Hazlitt himself had begun to write in 1814. The letter concludes as follows: 'The drift of these questions, is, I believe, sufficiently obvious and direct; but if they should not be thought clear enough in themselves, I am ready to add a suitable commentary to them, by collating a convenient number of passages from the Essay, the Reply, and the Review.'

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1. LETTER I. First published in Cobbett's *Political Register*, March 14, 1807: xi. 398.

The proposed alteration. Hazlitt alludes to the poor-law bill of Samuel Whitbread (1758-1815), introduced on February 19, 1807. One of the main features of the scheme was the establishment of a system of free education. The bill was attacked not only by Cobbett (*Political Register*, August, September, and October, 1807), and Hazlitt, but also by Malthus. Portions of the scheme passed their second readings as separate bills, but were abandoned. See Martineau, *History of the Peace*, I. 116.

2. '*Who have none to help them.*' *Job*, xxix. 12.

'*Pride and covetousness.*' *St. Mark*, vii. 22.

'*The compunctious visitings of nature.*' *Macbeth*, Act I. Scene 5.

'*Laying the flattering unction.*' *Hamlet*, Act III. Scene 4.

'*Grinding the faces of the poor.*' *Isaiah*, iii. 15.

Mandeville. He refers to Bernard Mandeville (1670 ?-1733), whose *Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices Public Benefits*, appeared in 1714.

'*Will but skin and film,*' *etc. Hamlet*, Act III. Scene 4.

Note. *The late Sir W. Pulteney.* Sir William Johnstone Pulteney, 5th bart. of Westerhall (1721-1805), M.P. for Shrewsbury in seven successive parliaments. His name was originally Johnstone, but he took the name of Pulteney on marrying the youngest daughter and heiress of Daniel Pulteney, Lord of the Admiralty in Sir R. Walpole's Ministry. 'In private life he was remarked principally for his frugal habits, which were perhaps the more striking, as he was supposed to be the richest Commoner in the kingdom. . . . In the latter part of his life he was remarkable for his abstemious manner of living, his food being composed of the most simple nourishment, principally bread and milk.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, June, 1805, Vol. LXXV., p. 587. In 1804 he married the widow of Andrew Stuart, who fought a duel with Thurlow in connection with the Douglas cause. Cf. *ante*, p. 298.

3. *In corpore vili.* This well known saying was quoted by Burke in his great speech on conciliation with America. See *Select Works*, ed. Payne, I. 224.

NEWMAN ... 2030 ... BERKELEY, CAL.

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The editor in a note (p. 325) quotes from Menagiana (3rd ed., p. 129) an anecdote of Muretus which is said to be the origin of the saying.

4. '*Baser matter.*' *Hamlet*, Act I. Scene 5.

5. *Leurre de dupe.* An expression of Rousseau's (*Confessions*, Liv. IV.).

Unsuccessful endeavours, etc. Hazlitt refers to Whitbread's management of the impeachment of Lord Melville for malversation as Treasurer of the Navy. Melville was acquitted on June 12, 1806.

6. *The celebrated Howard.* John Howard died of camp fever at Kerson on January 20, 1790, while investigating the condition of Russian military hospitals.

The 'champion,' etc. A reference to Pitt's description of Buonaparte as 'the child and champion of Jacobinism. See Vol. III., note to page 99.

7. '*The latter end,*' *etc. Tempest*, Act II. Scene 1.

LETTER II. *Political Register*, May 16, 1807 : XI. 883.

The English have been called, etc. Diderot said this in his *Lettre sur les aveugles*, ed. Tourneux, I. 312, but the opinion was expressed more than once in France during the period of Anglomania which prevailed in the middle of the eighteenth century. Cf. Texte, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (trans. Matthews) pp. 96 *et. seq.*

8. '*Worthless importunity in rags.*'

'—— Lib'ral of their aid
To clam'rous Importunity in rags.'
Cowper, *The Task*, IV. 413-4.

9. '*Its bane and antidote.*' Addison's *Cato*, Act V. Scene I.

Multum abludit imago. Horace, *Satires*, II. 3, 320.

Wallace is the chief. Robert Wallace (1697-1771), a minister of the Scottish Church, published his *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature, and Providence*, in 1761. The British Museum copy of Hazlitt's *Reply* contains the following MS. note : 'The writer of this note put into the hands of Mr. Hazlitt in the year 1828 a small volume entitled "a philosophical survey of the animal creation, which is a translation (by the author) of the Théorie du Système Animal," which the Rev. John Bruckner had published some time before : after a perusal of the English edition of this work, Mr. Hazlitt admitted that the principles of the Essay on Population had been anticipated to a greater extent by the Flemish Divine, who settled in England, than they had been by Mr. Wallace.' The Rev. John Bruckner (1726-1804), Minister of the Dutch Church at Norwich, published his *Théorie au Système Animal* in 1767, and *Criticisms on the Diversions of Purley* in 1790.

14. '*Present circumstances of the earth.*' In the *Political Register* Hazlitt has the following note : 'A different spirit breathes through this chapter from that of the Essay ; the spirit of a gentleman, a philosopher, and a philanthropist. Mr. Malthus, indeed, sometimes limps after his model, and *cants* liberality in the true whine of hypocrisy.'

15. '*So will his anticipation,*' *etc.* 'So shall my anticipation prevent your discovery.' *Hamlet*, Act II. Scene 2.

Arithmetical series. In the *Political Register* the following note is appended : 'As far as I understand the nature of an arithmetical and geometrical series, I do not apprehend that Mr. M. could make good their strict application to the subject. An arithmetical series is where any number or quantity is increased by the perpetual addition of the same given sum or quantity. But how does Mr. M. know that this is true of the cultivation of the land, or that much more rapid strides may not be made at one time than at another ?'

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15. *Mr. Shandy was of opinion, etc.* *Tristram Shandy*, Book I. chap. xix.

18. LETTER III. *Political Register*, May 23, 1807: xi. 935. Hazlitt published part of this letter in his *Political Essays*. See vol. III. pp. 367-374.

'*A swaggering paradox*,' *etc.* Cf. 'The paradoxes of one age become the commonplaces of the next.' Jowett, *Plato*, III. 155.

19. *The reply of the author of the Political Justice.* In *Thoughts on Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon* (1801) Godwin replied to Parr, Mackintosh, and Malthus. Many years later, in 1820, he wrote *Of Population. An Enquiry concerning the Power of Increase in the Numbers of Mankind, in Answer to Mr. Malthus on that Subject.*

21. '*The exuberant strength of my argument.*' A phrase of Malthus's. *Essay on Population*, p. 372.

22. '*What conjuration*,' *etc.* *Othello*, Act I. Scene 3.

23. *And as Trim. Tristram Shandy*, Book VI. chap. xxiii.

24. '*These three bear record*,' *etc.* Cf. 1 *John*, v. 7.

25. ''*Tis as easy as lying*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act III. Scene 2.

To sum up the whole of the argument. The conclusion of Letter III. from this point is not in the *Political Register*.

'*And less than smallest dwarfs*,' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, I. 779-781.

28. '*It cannot but be*,' *etc.* Malthus, *Essay on Population*, pp. 353-4.

29. '*Who am no great clerk*.' Cf. Burke, *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (*Works*, Bohn, V. 150). 'He [Lord Keppel] was no great clerk.'

35. '*It may be safely affirmed*,' *etc.* Malthus, pp. 7-8.

36. *Sancho Panza. Don Quixote*, Part II., Book III., chap. xlix.

38. '*Fast by*,' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, II. 1051-2.

'*To nature's furthest verge*,' *etc.*

> 'Shoots far into the bosom of dim night
> A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins
> Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire,' etc.
> *Paradise Lost*, II. 1036-8.

'*Come on, sir*,' *etc.* *King Lear*, Act IV. Scene 6.

41. *A new Iliad of woes.* See note to vol. III. p. 10.

42. '*It keeps on its way*,' *etc.* Cf.

> '——I do know but one
> That unassailable holds on his rank,
> Unshaked of motion.'
> *Julius Caesar*, Act III. Scene 1.

44. '*Squalid poverty*.' Malthus, p. 516.

Note. '*I am not as this poor Hottentot*.' Cf. 'God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, etc. *St. Luke*, xviii. 11.

Note. '*Chill and comfortless*.' Cf. 'All dark and comfortless.' *King Lear*, Act III. Scene 7.

45. '*Palaces, her ladies and her pomp*.'

> 'Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp of equipage.'
> Cowper, *The Task*, I. 643-4.

46. '*Upland swells*,' *etc.*

> 'The grassy uplands' gentle swells
> Echo to the bleat of flocks.'
> Coleridge, *Ode on the Departing Year*, ll. 125-6.

53. *When Don Quixote had to encounter, etc.* See *Don Quixote*, Part II., Book I. Chap. xiv.

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55. '*Their greatest merit*,' *etc.* *Othello*, Act III. Scene 3.
No maid could live near such a man. See note to vol. I. p. 305.

56. '*Were they as prime*,' *etc.* *Othello*, Act III. Scene 3.
Note. *Even Miss Howe, etc.* In *Clarissa Harlowe.*

62. '*The sin that most easily besets him.*' *Hebrews*, xii. 1.
'*The rich golden shaft*,' *etc.* *Twelfth Night*, Act I. Scene 1.
'*All for love, or the world well lost.*' Dryden's version of *Antony and Cleopatra* (1678).

63. '*But as the dust in the balance.*' *Isaiah*, xl. 15.
Aaron's rod. *Exodus*, vii. 12.
'*Sits umpire*,' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, II. 907-9.
'*Our greatest good*,' *etc.* 'Its former strength was but plethoric ill.'
Goldsmith, *The Traveller*, 144.

66. *Described by Hogarth.* In what Lamb calls the 'sublime print,' entitled 'Gin Lane.'

70. *Hume's assertion.* *Dialogues on Natural Religion*, Part XI. p. 212. The assertion is denied by Malthus in his Essay, p. 587.

71. Note. *A late publication.* *Letters to Samuel Whitbread, M.P., on his proposed Bill for the Amendment of the Poor Laws* (1807).
Note. *Jactet, etc.* 'Illa se jactet in aula Aeolus.' Virgil, *Æneid*, I. 140-1.

81. *Algernon Sydney.* Sidney's *Discourses concerning Government*, written about 1680, in reply to Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, were first published in 1698.

82. '*The face of the clearest warning*,' *etc.* Quoted inaccurately from Malthus. See *ante*, pp. 173-4.

83. Note. '*Monks, eremites*,' *etc.*
'Embryos and idiots, eremites and friars,
White, black, and grey, with all their trumpery.'
Paradise Lost, III. 474-5.

84. *Lord Kaims's account, etc.* See Lord Kames's *Sketches of the History of Man*, vol II. pp. 240-1 (edit. 1788).

85. *A common-place book.* Hazlitt refers to James Burgh's (1714-1775) *Political Disquisitions: or, an Enquiry into public Errors, Defects, and Abuses. Illustrated by, and established upon Facts and Remarks extracted from a Variety of Authors, ancient and modern. Calculated to draw the timely attention of Government and People to a due Consideration of the Necessity, and the Means, of reforming those Errors, Defects, and Abuses; of restoring the Constitution, and saving the State.* (3 vols. 1774-5).
'*That honest Chronicler.*' 'But such an honest chronicler as Griffith.' *Henry VIII.*, Act IV. Scene 2.
'*The excellent Montague.*' *Reflections on the Rise and Fall of the Antient Republics. Adapted to the Present State of Great Britain*, by Edward Wortley Montagu (1713-1776), son of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, was published in 1759. See Burgh's *Political Disquisitions*, III. 68 *et seq.*

90. *The descendants of the heroes, etc.* This passage to the end of the quotation is from Bolingbroke's *Political Tracts*, 270. See Burgh, III. 414.

91. *The account which Voltaire gives.* Burgh (III. 410) quotes this passage from *Essais sur l'Histoire*, II. 60.
Since that time it has fallen, etc. It is difficult to understand what such a worshipper of Napoleon as Hazlitt means by this sentence. The Vienna Congress (1815) ultimately declared the perpetual neutrality of Switzerland.

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92. '*I see,' he says, etc.* Burgh, III. 416.
'*A consummation,' etc. Hamlet*, Act III. Scene 1.

93. *Lord Molesworth.* Robert Molesworth, first Viscount Molesworth (1656-1725), was appointed envoy extraordinary at the Danish Court in 1692, but left abruptly in 1694, and in the same year published *An Account of Denmark as it was in the year* 1692. See Burgh, III. 412.

95. '*It must indeed be an answer,' etc. All's Well that Ends Well*, Act II. Scene 2.
'*A thing may serve,' etc. Ibid.*
Burnet's Travels. Gilbert Burnet's *Some Letters containing an Account of what seemed most remarkable in Switzerland, Italy, etc.* (1686). See Burgh, III. 398-9.
'*Italy shews,' etc. Ibid.* III. 399.
'*In England,' etc. Ibid.* III. 400.

96. '*The title of freemen,' etc.* From Spelman's *Glossary*, quoted in Burgh, III. 400.
'*It is constantly,' etc.* Quoted by Burgh (III. 400) from Hume's *History of the Tudors*, II. 640.
'*Nations have often,' etc.* Burgh, III. 34.
'*A single genius,' etc. Ibid.* III. 220.
'*Commerce,' etc. Ibid.* III. 83-4.
'*The extreme poverty,' etc. Ibid.* III. 84.

97. '*Government, according to Plato,' etc.* Cf. Burgh, III. 175-8.
'*The great difference we see,' etc. Ibid.* III. 220.
'*Among the Lacedemonians,' etc. Ibid.* III. 150.

98. '*Aristotle lays down,' etc. Ibid.* III. 156.
'*Lycurgus did not allow,' etc. Ibid.*
'*At Sparta,' etc. Ibid.* III. 181.
'*A very wise man,' etc. Ibid.* III. 100.

99. '*The grave Romans,' etc.* Cf. *Ibid.* III. 100. The saying alluded to is Cicero's. 'Nemo enim fere saltat sobrius, nisi forte insanit.' *Pro Murena.* Cap. 6.
'*In the old English laws,' etc.* Quoted by Burgh (III. 139) from Spelman's *Concilia.*
'*Who elbow us aside,' etc.*

> 'Till prostitution elbow us aside
> In all our crowded streets.'
>
> Cowper, *The Task*, III. 60-1.

100. '*Insensés qui vous plaignez,' etc.* Hazlitt seems to be recalling imperfectly a passage in Rousseau's *Émile* (Liv. I.) :—'Nous plaignons le sort de l'enfance, et c'est le nôtre qu'il faudroit plaindre. Nos plus grands maux nous viennent de nous.' See also a letter to Voltaire, 18th August 1756. *Correspondance* (1822), I. 216 et seq.

101. *Zaleucus.* See Burgh, III. 180.
The greedy eye, etc. Cf. *The English Comic Writers.* ('Comic Writers of the last Century') and *The Round Table* ('On Modern Comedy'), vol. I., p. 13.

102. *Narcissus and the Graces.* A ballet by Sir Henry Rowley Bishop (1786-1855), produced at the King's Theatre, June, 1806.
Note. *The Memoirs of Fanny Hill. Fanny Hill, or the Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, by John Cleland (1709-1789), was published, Part I. in 1748, Part II. in 1749. In 1750 the work was republished in a milder form by Ralph Griffiths, who is said to have paid twenty guineas for the copyright, and made a profit of £10,000. Cleland was summoned before the Privy Council, and received a pension of £100 from Lord Granville that he might devote himself to worthier forms of literature.

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104. '*In which the wicked*,' *etc.* *Job*, iii. 17.
'*Happy are they*,' *etc.* Hazlitt repeated this paragraph in a paper in *The Yellow Dwarf*. See *Political Essays*, vol. III., note to p. 266.
'*Hurt by the archers*.' Cowper, *The Task*, III. 113.

105. '*M. Condorcet's "Esquisse,"*' *etc.* Malthus, p. 354. Condorcet's work appeared in 1794.

106. '*This posthumous publication*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*

107. '*This would indeed*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 368.

108. *White Conduit-House.* A 'popular place of entertainment and tea-gardens' at Pentonville. See Wheatley and Cunningham's *London Past and Present*, III. 496, and *ibid*, I. 86, for an account of Bagnigge-Wells, a 'noted place of entertainment, much resorted to by the lower sort of tradesman,' in the neighbourhood of King's Cross.
'*There exists*,' *etc.* Malthus, p. 355.

109. '*Such establishments*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 356.

110. '*Killing frost*.' *Henry VIII.*, Act III. Scene 2. See Malthus, p. 356.

111. '*Variations*,' *etc.* Malthus, p, 359.

112. '*It will be said, perhaps*.' *Ibid.* p. 362.

113. '*What can we reason*,' *etc.* Pope's *Essay on Man*, I. 18.

116. Note. Dr. Paley. See his *Evidences of Christianity*. Preparatory Considerations. Of the antecedent credibility of miracles.

117. *The old argument of the Heap.* Hazlitt alludes to a favourite logical *impasse* of the Stoics: 'What constitutes a heap? Is it two, three, or four atoms, and on taking them away, when does a heap cease to exist?' Cf. Horace, *Ep.* II. 1-47; and Cicero, *De Div.* II. 4.
'*It does not, however*,' *etc.* Malthus, p. 363.
Quotes Bickerstaff. See *The Tatler*, No. 75.
'*Mr. Godwin*,' *etc.* Malthus, p. 367.

118. '*It is not, therefore*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 43.

120. '*They neither marry*,' *etc.* *St. Matthew*, xxii. 30.

122. '*It may be curious*,' *etc.* Malthus, p. 374.

128. *The charge which he brings against Paine.* *Ibid.* p. 530.

130. '*Those who were born*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 377.

132. '*A man*' *he says*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 531.

134. '*In most countries*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 537.

135. '*There is one right*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 531.

138. '*Sharpens his understanding*,' *etc.* 'Thy flinty heart,' occurs in *Henry VI.*, Part II., Act III. Scene 2.

139. '*Metaphysical aid*.' *Macbeth*, Act I. Scene 5.

140. '*The quantity of food*,' *etc.* Malthus, p. 375.

142. '*As Mr. Godwin*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 381.

143. '*He is himself again*.' 'Richard 's himself again.' Colley Cibber's version of *Richard III.*, Act V. Scene 3.

145. '*Which after*,' *etc.* Butler, *Hudibras*, Part II., Canto I, 377-8.
'*Suppose*,' *etc.* Malthus, p. 396.
'*The question is*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 422.

146. '*It may at first*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 398.

150. '*They lay heavy burthens*,' *etc.* *St. Matthew*, xxiii. 4.
'*Fared sumptuously*,' *etc.* *St. Luke*, xvi. 19.

151. '*If instead*,' *etc.* Malthus, p. 405.

153. '*Whose solid virtue*,' *etc.* *Othello*, Act IV. Scene 1.

156. '*Independently of any considerations*,' *etc.* Malthus, p. 409.

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157. '*Alas from what height fallen.*' Cf.

> '—— into what pit thou seest
> From what highth fallen.'
> *Paradise Lost*, I. 91-2.

And

> 'Alas, from what high hope to what relapse
> Unlooked for are we fallen!'
> *Paradise Regained*, II. 30-1.

158. '*Comes to him*,' *etc.* *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I. Scene 4.
'*Shall no more impart*,' *etc.* Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village*, 239-40.
'*Their drunkenness and dissipation.*' Malthus, p. 411.
'*Their squalid appearance.*' See *Ibid.* p. 516.

159. '*The symmetry of person*,' *etc.* This is a quotation of Malthus's (p. 488) from Godwin (*Political Justice*, Vol. I., Book I., Chap. v).
'*Our Doctors Commons*,' *etc.* Malthus, p. 576.
'*Father Paul.*' In Sheridan's *Duenna*, first performed in 1775 at Covent Garden.
'*That the poor*,' *etc.* Malthus, p. 411.
'*A man who*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*

160. '"*If*," *says he*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 540.

161. '*This is well said*,' *etc.* *Henry VIII.*, Act III. Scene 2.

162. '*I like not*,' *etc.* *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act. IV. Scene 2.

165. *Omne tulit punctum.* Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 343.

166. *Mr. Burke has said.* 'Nobody will be argued into slavery.' *Speech on American Taxation* (April 19, 1774, *Select Works*, ed. Payne, I. 155).

166. '*Among the prejudices*,' *etc.* Malthus, p. 477.
Note. *Tucker.* Abraham Tucker (1705-1774), whose chief work *The Light of Nature Pursued* (7 vols, 1768-1778) was abridged by Hazlitt (1807). See *ante*, pp. 371-385. Paley admitted his obligations to Tucker.

168. '*Will come when it will come.*' *Julius Caesar*, Act II. Scene 2.
'*The object of those*,' *etc.* Malthus, p. 508.

169. '*The pressure of distress*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 525.
Blifil. In *Tom Jones.*
The euthanasia foretold by Hume. See his Essay 'On the British Government.' 'They talk,' said Burke, 'of Mr. Hume's Euthanasia of the British Constitution gently expiring without a groan in the paternal arms of a mere Monarchy. In a monarchy! Fine trifling indeed! There is no such Euthanasia for the British Constitution.' *Regicide Peace* (ed. Payne), p. 352.

172. *Timeo Danaos, et dona ferentes.* Virgil, *Aeneid*, II. 49.
As the husband secured the virtue of his wife, etc. That is, presumably, by cutting off her head, 'the Sign of the Good Woman,' representing a headless woman carrying her head in her hand.

173. '*I should propose*,' *etc.* Malthus, p. 538. A great part of the rest of Hazlitt's *Reply* was repeated in the *Political Essays*. See vol. III. pp. 374-381.

176. '*These paper bullets of the brain.*' *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act II. Scene 3.

177. '*Would submit to the sufferings, etc.* Malthus, p. 539.

180. '*The scanty relief*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 415.
'*If, as in Ireland*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 548.

181. '*It is not enough*,' *etc.* *Ibid.* p. 549.

183. '*In some conversations*,' *etc.* *Ibid*, p. 553.
Anthony's repeated declaration. *Julius Caesar*, Act III. Scene 2.

184. '*It very rarely*,' *etc.* Malthus's *Essay* (1st edition, 1798), p. 34.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

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189. JEREMY BENTHAM. This essay appeared originally in the *New Monthly Magazine* (1824, vol. x. p. 68), of which Thomas Campbell was editor from 1820 to 1830. For an account of Bentham's life and work, see Sir Leslie Stephen's *The English Utilitarians*, vol. i. pp. 169-326.

The old adage. 'A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.' *St. Matthew*, xiii. 57.

In the plains of Chili, etc. Bentham had many disciples among the patriots of South America, and in 1808 thought seriously of going to Mexico.

Westminster, where he lives. In Queen Square Place, now Queen Anne's Gate. Hazlitt himself was from 1812 to 1819 a tenant of Bentham's in Milton's old house in Petty France, the garden of which Bentham had added to his house in Queen Square. See frontispiece to vol. III., and *ante*, p. 190.

'*I know thee*,' *etc.* 'I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee: my mistress show'd me thee, and thy dog, and thy bush.' *The Tempest*, Act II. Scene 2.

Mr. Hobhouse. John Cam Hobhouse (1786-1869) was defeated at Westminster in February 1819, but was returned in the following year.

Lord Rolle. John Rolle (1795-1842) was the hero of *The Rolliad*, and sat for the great maritime county of Devonshire. He was raised to the peerage in 1796. See Wraxall's *Historical and Posthumous Memoirs* (ed. Wheatley, IV. 116-119).

'*That waft a thought*,' *etc.* 'And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.' Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard*, 58.

Sir Samuel Romilly. Romilly was returned for Westminster in July 1818. He had already taken an active part in Parliament as a law-reformer.

190. '*Lone island*,' *etc.* 'Some happier island in the watery waste.' Pope, *Essay on Man*, I. 106.

Chrestomathic School. The object of this was to apply Lancasterian principles to the education of the middle classes. An association, of which Mackintosh, Brougham, James Mill, and others were trustees, was formed in 1814, and Bentham offered his garden as a site, but the scheme came to nothing. See Sir Leslie Stephen's *The English Utilitarians*, vol. II. p. 22.

Franklin. Bentham seems to have had a strong personal resemblance to Benjamin Franklin.

191. *Foregone conclusion. Othello*, Act III. Scene 3.

192. *Mr. Bentham is not the first writer, etc.* The principle of utility had been expressed by (among others) Priestley (*Essay on Government*, 1768), Hutcheson (*Enquiry concerning Moral Good and Evil*, 1725), and Beccaria (*On Crimes and Punishments*, 1764). See *The English Utilitarians*, vol. I. p. 178.

'*He has not allowed for the wind.*' A familiar expression which Hazlitt may have seen in *Ivanhoe*, Chap. xiii.

'*Bound volatile Hermes.*' *Paradise Lost*, III. 602-3.

193. '*All appliances*,' *etc. Henry IV.*, Part II., Act III. Scene 1.

Posthaec, etc. 'Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit.' Virgil, *Aeneid*, I. 203.

195. *No more than Montaigne, etc.* Essays, Booke II., Chap. xii. An Apologie of Raymond Sebond. Florio's translation, *Temple Classics*, Vol. II., p. 209.

196. '*All men act*,' *etc.* 'Men calculate, some with less exactness, indeed, some

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with more: but all men calculate. I would not say, that even a madman does not calculate.' *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Chap. XIV. § xxviii.

196. *Too knowing by half.* 'That's too civil by half.' Sheridan, *The Rivals*, Act III. Scene 4.

197. *A Panopticon.* 'A mill for grinding rogues honest, and idle men industrious' (Bentham, *Works*, x. 226). Bentham published an account of the scheme in 1791 under the title of 'The Panopticon, or the Inspection House,' and spent a great deal of money in connection with it. Ultimately a committee reported against the scheme and proceeded to found the Millbank Penitentiary, which was opened in 1816. See *The English Utilitarians*, I. 193-206.

197. '*Dip it in the ocean,' etc.* 'But I fear, friend, said I, this buckle won't stand . . . you may immerse it, replied he, into the ocean, and it will stand.' *A Sentimental Journey*, The Wig, Paris.

198. *Mr. Owen.* Cf. *Political Essays* (vol. III. pp. 121-7) and *Table-Talk* ('On People with one Idea').

His address to the higher and middle classes. The second of Coleridge's Lay Sermons (1817) was 'addressed to the higher and middle classes.'

Hunter's captivity among the North American Indians. J. Dunn Hunter's *Memoirs of a Captivity amongst the Indians of North America, from Childhood to the Age of Nineteen, etc.*, 1824.

199. *In nook monastic.* 'To forswear the full stream of the world and to live in a nook merely monastic.' *As You Like It*, Act III. Scene 2.

'*Men of Ind.*' *The Tempest*, Act II. Scene 2.

Mr. Speaker Abbott. Charles Abbot (1757-1829) was Speaker from 1802 to 1817, when he retired and became Lord Colchester. His mother was the second wife of Bentham's father. His unique Diary and Correspondence, extending from 1795 to 1829, were published in 3 vols. in 1861.

He was educated at Eton. Bentham was a Westminster boy.

200. *At the University.* Bentham went to Queen's College, Oxford, in 1760, and took his M.A. degree in 1766.

Church-of-Englandism. Church of Englandism and its Catechism examined, published in 1818.

'*To be honest,' etc. Hamlet*, Act II. Scene 2.

'*Looked enough abroad,' etc.* 'The corrupter sort of politicians, who are not by learning established in a love of duty, nor ever look abroad into universality.' *Advancement of Learning*, Book I.

Mr. Godwin. For Godwin see C. Kegan Paul's *William Godwin: his Friends and Contemporaries*, 2 vols. 1876.

201. *Political Justice.* Godwin's *Enquiry concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness* was published in 1793, *Things as they are; or the Adventures of Caleb Williams* in 1794.

As Goldsmith used to say. 'Whenever I write any thing, the public *make a point* to know nothing about it.' Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (ed. G. B. Hill), III. 252.

Sedet, in eternumque, etc.

'Sedet, aeternumque sedebit,
Infelix Theseus.'

Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI. 617-18.

The false Duessa. The Faerie Queene, Book II., Canto ii., and Canto viii. Stanzas 46-8.

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201. *His House of Pride.*

'And all the hinder partes, that few could spie,
Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly.'
Ibid. Book I., Canto iv. Stanza 5.

'*The pillar'd firmament*,' etc. *Comus*, 598-9.

202. '*What, then*,' etc. *St. Matthew*, xi. 7.

Mr. Southey's Inscriptions. Southey's early 'Inscriptions' (1796-9), some of which he reprinted in the collected edition of his poems (1837-8), are, like his *Joan of Arc* and *Wat Tyler*, strongly radical in sentiment. See Hazlitt's *Political Essays* (vol. III. p. 205).

Mr. Coleridge's Religious Musings. Published in *Poems on Various Subjects*, 1796.

'*Like Cato*,' etc. Pope, *Prologue to the Satires*, 208. The line is taken from Pope's own Prologue to Addison's *Cato*.

'*By that sin fell the angels. Henry VIII.*, Act III. Scene 2.

204. '*There was the rub*,' etc.

'There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.'
Hamlet, Act III. Scene 1.

204. '*Trenchant blade.*'

'Let not the virgin's cheek
Make soft thy trenchant sword.'
Timon of Athens, Act IV. Scene 3.

'*All is conscience and tender heart.*' Chaucer, *Prologue*, 150.

Note. See John Leland's *A View of the Deistical Writers*, etc., Letter vii.

205. '*So ran the tenour of the bond.*' Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV. Scene 1.

'*It was well said*,' etc. See *ante*, note to p. 161.

'*Fallen first*,' etc. *Hamlet*, Act II. Scene 2.

'*Lost the immortal part*,' etc. *Othello*, Act II. Scene 3.

'*The guide*,' etc.

'The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.'
Wordsworth, *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey.*

206. *Sir Walter Scott.* 'Scott's baronetcy,' says Lockhart, 'was conferred on him, not in consequence of any Ministerial suggestion, but by the King personally, and of his own unsolicited motion; and when the Poet kissed his hand he said to him: "I shall always reflect with pleasure on Sir Walter Scott's having been the first creation of my reign."' The baronetcy was Gazetted on March 30, 1820.

'*When in Auvergne*,' etc. Quoted inaccurately from *Quentin Durward*, Chap. i.

'*Reason is the queen*,' etc. Hazlitt quotes a passage of his own. See *Political Essays*, Vol. III., pp. 90-1.

207. '*The unreasonableness of the reason*,' etc. See *Don Quixote*, Book I., Chap. i.

'*Flying an eagle flight*,' etc. *Timon of Athens*, Act I. Scene 1.

'*Thus far*,' etc. *Job*, xxxviii. 11.

Captain Parry. Captain, afterwards Sir William Edward Parry (1790-1855) had recently returned from the second of his voyages for the discovery of a north-west passage.

208. '*Championing it to the Outrance.*' 'And champion me to the utterance!' *Macbeth*, Act III. Scene 1.

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208. *Caleb Williams.* Published in 1794. *St. Leon: A Tale of the Sixteenth Century*, appeared in 1799.

Note. *Mr. Fuseli.* Henry Fuseli (1741-1825), the painter, for whom, according to his biographer, Mary Wollstonecraft (afterwards Godwin's wife) formed her first attachment.

209. '*Bastards of his art.*' Cf.

> 'Thought characters and words merely but art
> And bastards of his foul adulterate heart.'
> Shakespeare, *A Lover's Complaint*, ll. 174-5.

Allen-a-Dale. This 'northern minstrel' figures in Scott's own *Ivanhoe.*

Fleetwood. Fleetwood; or, the New Man of Feeling, was published in 1805, *Mandeville: a Tale of the Seventeenth Century*, in 1817.

210. *His Life of Chaucer.* Published in 1803.

His Remarks on Judge Eyre's Charge to the Jury. Cursory Strictures on the Charge of Chief-Justice Eyre appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* on October 20, 1794. Godwin's own note and the notes of his daughter, Mrs. Shelley, on the political trials of that year, will be found in C. Kegan Paul's *William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries* (I. 117-137). Cf. Hazlitt's *Life of Thomas Holcroft*, Vol. II., pp. 139 *et seq.*

Skulked behind a British throne. See Vol. I., p. 378, note.

A Volume of Sermons. Sketches of History, in Six Sermons (1784).

A life of Chatham. Published anonymously in 1783.

Note. *Antonio*, a tragedy in verse, was produced on December 13, 1800, and 'damned finally and hopelessly.' See Kegan Paul (II. 36-55), where Lamb's account of the tragedy and its representation (not reprinted in the *Essays of Elia*) is quoted from a paper in the *London Magazine* (April 1, 1822). *Faulkener* (not *Ferdinand*), a tragedy in prose, was produced with more success on December 16, 1807. Lamb wrote prologues to both plays. This play, which was sent to Holcroft to be touched up for the stage, led to a quarrel between the friends. See Kegan Paul, II. 122 *et seq.*

Mr. Fawcett. For Hazlitt's account of Joseph Fawcett see *Table Talk* (On Criticism).

A Speech on General Warrants. Hazlitt refers to a speech of Chatham's, not on General Warrants, but on the Cyder Tax in the Budget of 1763. The Parliamentary History gives only a few lines, but the passage quoted by Hazlitt will be found in Lord Brougham's *Historical Studies of Statesmen during George III.'s reign.*

212. *Mr. Coleridge, who, etc.* Hazlitt seems to refer to Coleridge's Lectures on Poetry, delivered at the Royal Institution in 1808.

A History of the Commonwealth of England. Published in 4 volumes, 1824-8.

A very admirable likeness. Reproduced as frontispiece to Vol. I. of Kegan Paul's *William Godwin, etc.*

Mrs. Wollstonecraft. Godwin married Mary Wollstonecraft on March 29, 1797. Mrs. Inchbald, according to Mrs. Shelley (Kegan Paul, I. 239) shed tears when the announcement was made to her.

213. *And thank the bounteous Pan.* 'In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan.' *Comus*, 176.

'*A mind reflecting ages past.*' These words occur in the first line of a laudatory poem on Shakespeare printed in the second folio (1632). The poem is signed 'J. M. S.' and was attributed by Coleridge to 'John Milton, Student.' See his *Lectures on Shakspere* (ed. T. Ashe), pp. 129-30.

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213. '*Dark rearward and abyss.*' Cf. 'In the dark backward and abysm of time.' *The Tempest*, Act I., Scene 2.

'*That which was now a horse*,' *etc.* *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act IV. Scene 14.

'*Quick, forgetive, apprehensive.*' 'Makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive.' *Henry IV.*, Part II., Act IV. Scene 3.

214. '*What in him is weak*,' *etc.* Cf.

> '—— what in me is dark,
> Illumine, what is low raise and support.'
>
> *Paradise Lost*, I. 22-3.

'*And by the force*,' *etc.*

> 'As by the strength of their illusion
> Shall draw him on to his confusion.'
>
> *Macbeth*, Act III. Scene 5.

'*Blear* illusion' is a phrase of Milton's (*Comus*, 155).

'*Rich strond.*' See *The Faerie Queene*, Book III., Canto IV., Stanzas 18., 29., and 34.

'*Goes sounding on his way.*' Hazlitt seems to have had a hazy recollection of two passages in Chaucer's *Prologue*. In his essay on 'My First Acquaintance with Poets,' he says, 'the scholar in Chaucer is described as going "sounding on his way,"' and in his *Lectures on the English Poets* (see Vol. V., p. 13) he says 'the merchant, as described in Chaucer, went on his way "sounding always the increase of his winning."' The scholar is not described as 'sounding on his way,' but Chaucer says of him, 'Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,' while the merchant, though 'souninge alway th' encrees of his winning,' is not described as going on his way. Wordsworth has a line (*Excursion*, Book III.), 'Went sounding on a dim and perilous way,' but it seems clear that Hazlitt thought he was quoting Chaucer.

'*His own nothings monstered.*' *Coriolanus*, Act II. Scene 2.

215. '*Letting contemplation*,' *etc.* Cf. 'Till Contemplation had her fill.' Dyer, *Grongar Hill*, l. 26.

'*Sailing with supreme dominion*,' *etc.* Gray, *The Progress of Poesy*, 115-6.

'*He lisped in numbers*,' *etc.* Pope, *Prologue to the Satires*, 128.

Ode on Chatterton. *Monody on the Death of Chatterton*, written in 1790 when Coleridge was eighteen.

Gained several prizes. At Cambridge Coleridge won the Browne Gold Medal for a Greek Ode in 1792.

216. '*Struggling in vain*,' *etc.* Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, Book VI.

'*Etherial braid*,' *etc.* Hazlitt perhaps recalled two passages from Collins, 'with brede etherial wove' (*Ode to Evening*), and 'the shadowy tribes of mind, in braided dance their murmurs joined' (*Ode on the Poetical Character*).

Next he was engaged, etc. Some foundation for this account of Coleridge will be found in his published writings, especially in *The Friend* and *Biographia Literaria*, but Hazlitt seems to have drawn largely upon his recollections of Coleridge's conversation. See his essay, 'My First Acquaintance with the Poets.'

Like Ariel. *The Tempest*, Act I. Scene 2.

Note. '*And so by many winding nooks*,' *etc.* *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act II. Scene 7.

Malebranche. The *De la Recherche de la Vérité* of Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715) was published in 1674.

Cudworth's Intellectual System. Ralph Cudworth's (1617-1688) *True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678).

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216. *Lord Brook's hieroglyphic theories.* For Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (1554-1628), the friend of Sir Philip Sidney, see Hazlitt's essay 'On persons one would wish to have seen' (*Literary Remains*), where Lamb speaks of Greville's 'apocalyptical, cabalistical' style.

The Duchess of Newcastle's fantastic folios. Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (1624-1674), published between 1653 and 1668 a number of folio volumes of poems, plays, and philosophical treatises. Lamb speaks of her (*Essays of Elia*, 'Mackery End in Hertfordshire') as 'the thrice noble, chaste, and virtuous, but again somewhat fantastical, and original-brained, generous Margaret Newcastle,' and in another essay (The Two Races of Men) charges Kenney with having carried off with him 'the letters of that princely woman, the thrice noble Margaret Newcastle.'

The hortus siccus of Dissent. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 14).

217. *John Huss, etc.* Cf. a passage in the *Political Essays*, vol, III. p. 265, and notes thereon.

His Religious Musings. First published in *Poems on various subjects* (1796).

The John Bull. The first number of 'John Bull,' Theodore Hook's rascally paper founded to oppose the agitation in favour of Queen Caroline, appeared on Dec. 17, 1820. Arbuthnot's *History of John Bull* appeared in 1712.

'*Laughed with Rabelais*,' *etc.*

> 'Or laugh and shake in Rab'lais easy chair.'
>
> Pope, *The Dunciad*, I. 22.

'*Spoke with rapture of Raphael*,' *etc.* Coleridge visited Rome in 1806 on his way from Malta to England.

218. *Sang for joy, etc.* Coleridge's Stanzas entitled *Destruction of the Bastile* (of which the second and third are lost) were first published in 1834. They were written about 1789, and Hazlitt may have seen them.

'*In Philarmonia's undivided dale.*' Coleridge in his lines *To the Rev. W. J. Hort*, plainly refers to the Pantisocracy scheme. Stanza 3, begins

> 'In Freedom's UNDIVIDED dell,
> Where *Toil* and *Health* with mellowed *Love* shall dwell,
> Far from folly, far from men,' etc.

'*Frailty*,' *etc.* 'Frailty, thy name is woman!' *Hamlet*, Act I. Scene 2.

Paragraphs in the Courier. Many of Coleridge's contributions to *The Courier*, chiefly from 1809 to 1811, are published in *Essays on his own Times* (1850).

A poet-laureate or stamp-distributor. The reference is of course to Southey and Wordsworth.

'*Bourne from whence*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act III. Scene 1.

219. *One splendid passage.* 'Alas! they had been friends in youth,' etc., lines 408-426. Cf. Hazlitt's *Lectures on the English Poets* (on the Living Poets).

The Friend. See note to vol. III. p. 139.

220. '*He cannot be constrained by mastery.*' Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, Book VI. See note to vol. III. p. 166.

221. '*Taught with the little nautilus to sail.*' Pope, *Essay on Man*, III. 177.

'*Youth at its prow*,' *etc.* Gray, *The Bard*, II. 2.

It was a misfortune, etc. This concluding paragraph was added in the second edition.

Instead of gathering, etc. Cf. Hazlitt's essay 'On Poetical Versatility' in *The Round Table* (vol. III. p. 151).

'*From the pelting of the pitiless storm.*' *King Lear*, Act III. Scene 4.

'*As with triple steel.*' *Paradise Lost*, II. 569.

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'*His words were hollow*,' *etc.* Cf. 'But all was false and hollow . . . yet he pleased the ear.' *Paradise Lost*, II. 112-7.

222. '*And curs'd the hour*,' *etc.*

'Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way!'
Collins, *Oriental Eclogues*, II.

Mr. Irving. This essay is from the *New Monthly Magazine* (1824, vol. x. p. 187). Edward Irving (1792-1834), after having been for a time Dr. Chalmers's assistant at Glasgow, came to London in July 1822, as minister of the Caledonian Asylum Chapel in Cross Street, Hatton Garden. In 1829 he removed into the new church, built for him in Regent Square, where the 'unknown tongues' began to be heard. Hazlitt wrote a paper for *The Liberal* (1823) entitled 'Pulpit Oratory, Dr. Chalmers and Mr. Irving,' reprinted in the present edition.

A burning and a shining light. St. John, v. 35.

'*Nothing extenuate*,' *etc. Othello*, Act v. Scene 2.

223. *After the last fight.* Between the Gas-man and Bill Neate described by Hazlitt himself in the Essay entitled 'The Fight,' republished in *Literary Remains*.

Shaw the Life-guardsman. Apostrophised by Moore in his *Epistle from Tom Crib to Big Ben.* In a note Moore describes him as 'a Life Guardsman, one of *the Fancy*, who distinguished himself, and was killed in the memorable *set-to* at Waterloo.'

Crib or Molyneux. Tom Cribb (1781-1848) the champion pugilist defeated Tom Molineaux, an American black, in two fights (1810 and 1811). At the time of Hazlitt's essay, Cribb had retired, and was proprietor of a public house, the King's Arms, at the corner of Duke Street and King Street, St. James's.

Miss Macauley's readings. Elizabeth Wright Macauley (1785-1837), poetess, actress, public reader, pamphleteer and preacher, appeared at Covent Garden in 1819 in the rôles of Mary Stuart and Jane Shore, but did not satisfy the managers, and was dismissed. After that she gave public readings and became a woman with a grievance. See her pamphlets, *Theatric Revolution* (1819) and *Facts against Falsehood* (1824). In 1833 she published a fragment of *Autobiographical Memoirs*.

Exeter-Change. The upper rooms of Exeter 'Change in the Strand were let for various purposes, among others for the purposes of a menagerie. Byron writes in his Journal (Nov. 1813, ed. Prothero, II. 319): 'Two nights ago I saw the tigers sup at Exeter 'Change.'

224. '*Lies floating many a rood*.' *Paradise Lost*, I. 196.

'*Bestrode the world*,' *etc. Julius Caesar*, Act I. Scene 2.

'*The player's province*,' *etc.* Robert Lloyd, *The Actor* (1760), ll. 67-8.

'*Damnation round the land*.' Pope, *The Universal Prayer*, St. 7.

'*Hath a smooth aspect*,' *etc.*

'He hath a person and a smooth dispose
To be suspected; framed to make women false.'
Othello, Act I. Scene 3.

'*Faultless monster*.' From the *Essay on Poetry* of John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham.

225. '*Consummation*,' *etc. Hamlet*, Act III. Scene 1.

'*A lusty man*, *etc.* 'A manly man, to been an abbot able.'
Chaucer, *Prologue*, 167.

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225. *Glanced an eye at Mr. Canning.* The immediate cause of Irving's popularity is said to have been a flattering reference to him by Canning in the House of Commons.

'*Like an eagle,*' *etc.* *Coriolanus*, Act v. Scene 6.

Peter Aretine. Pietro Aretino (1492-1557) 'the scourge of princes.'

226. '*God made the country,*' *etc.* Cowper, *The Task*, I. 749.

227. The 'Saints,' etc. Wilberforce was a prominent member of the 'Clapham Sect,' and represented Yorkshire from 1784 to 1812.

'*Hilting the house,*' *etc.* This expression is used by Burke in his speech on American taxation (Ap. 19, 1774). See *Select Works* (ed. Payne), I. 147 and note.

A Mr. Fox. William Johnson Fox (1786-1864), the anti-corn law orator, was at this time Unitarian preacher at the Chapel in South Place, Finsbury, which was built for him, and opened in 1824.

228. *The Duke of Sussex.* The sixth son of George III., created Duke of Sussex in 1801.

Miraturque, etc. 'Miraturque novas frondes et non sua poma.'
Virgil, *Georgics*, II. 82.

Dr. Chalmers. Chalmers's *Astronomical Discourses* (week-day sermons delivered at the Tron Church, Glasgow) were published in 1817, and in the same year he visited London where his sermons, at the Surrey Chapel, and at the Scotch Churches in London Wall and Swallow Street, created extraordinary enthusiasm. Hazlitt had heard him in Glasgow. See *Memoirs of W. Hazlitt*, II. 42.

'*Four Orations,*' *etc.* Irving's *For the Oracles of God, four Orations; for Judgment to Come, an Argument in nine Parts* was published in 1823. Lowndes mentions a third edition in 1824.

229. *Orator Henley.* John Henley (1692-1756), who preached at Newport Market, and, later, in what Pope calls 'Henley's gilt tub,' at Clare Market, is one of the heroes of the *Dunciad*—

> 'Embrowned with native bronze, lo! Henley stands,
> Tuning his voice, and balancing his hands.'
> Act III. 199, *et seq.*

Pope gives a long note upon him.

'*A monkey preacher.*' Hazlitt probably refers to the passage from the *Dunciad* referred to in the last note—

> 'Oh worthy thou of Aegypt's wise abodes,
> A decent priest, where monkeys were the gods!'
> III. 207-8.

'*By the coinage,*' *etc.* A composite quotation. Cf. 'This is the very coinage of your brain' (*Hamlet*, Act III. Scene 4), and 'A false creation, proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain' (*Macbeth*, Act II. Scene 1).

230. '*There's magic in the web.*' *Othello*, Act III. Scene 4.

'*By his so potent art,*' *etc.* *The Tempest*, Act v. Scene 1.

'*Now of the planetary,*' *etc.* Cf.

> 'And tell us whence the stars; why some are fix'd,
> And planetary some.'
> Cowper, *The Task*, Book III. 158.

'*In the very storm,*' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act III. Scene 2.

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230. '*To be admired*,' *etc.* Cf.

> 'Religion, if in heavenly truths attired,
> Needs only to be seen to be admired.'
> Cowper, *Expostulation*, 492-3.

231. *The late Mr. Horne Tooke.* Published originally in the *New Monthly Magazine* (1824, Vol. x. p. 246). Cf. *ante*, pp. 378 note and 389-390, and an essay 'On the Diversions of Purley' (*Literary Remains*).

'*So is the London Tavern!*' According to the usual version Horne Tooke said: 'So is the London Tavern—to those who can pay!'

Sir Allan Gardiner. Alan Gardner (1742-1809) the admiral, created a baronet in 1794, represented Westminster from 1796 till 1806, when he was raised to the peerage as Lord Gardner of Uttoxeter. Hazlitt refers to the general election of 1796 when Horne Tooke unsuccessfully stood for Westminster against Fox and Gardner.

232. '*The King's Old Courtier*,' *etc.*

> 'Like an old courtier of the queen's,
> And the queen's old courtier,'

is the burden of 'The Old and Young Courtier.' (See Percy's *Reliques*, ed. Wheatley, II. 315.)

'*Lord of himself*,' *etc.* 'Lord of yourself, uncumbered with a wife.' Dryden, *Epistle to John Driden*, 18.

233. *He used to plague Fuseli, etc.* 'He made strange havoc of Fuseli's fantastic hieroglyphics, violent humours, and oddity of dialect.' Hazlitt, 'On the Conversation of Authors.'

At G——'s. Godwin's presumably.

Young Betty's acting. William Henry West Betty (1791-1874), the young Roscius, made his first appearance in 1803 at the age of eleven, and finally retired from the stage in 1824. Many critics declared that his acting was finer than Kemble's, and Home said that he had not seen his own creation of Douglas adequately realised until he had seen Betty in the part. Cf. Hazlitt's essay on 'On Patronage and Puffing' in *Table-Talk*.

A professed orator. This was Coleridge. See Hazlitt's Essay 'On the Conversation of Authors' in *The Plain Speaker*, where Horne Tooke's conversational powers are described again.

235. '*Sacred vehemence.*' *Comus*, 795.

Lord Camelford. Thomas Pitt (1775-1804), second Lord Camelford, duellist and naval commander.

The only palpable hit, etc. Hazlitt included in his *Eloquence of the British Senate* Horne Tooke's speech (on the eligibility of clergymen to sit in Parliament), in which this hit was made. The reference in the note is to Letter LXVIII., to Lord Chief-Justice Mansfield.

236. '*Native and endued*,' *etc. Hamlet*, Act IV. Scene 7.

His trial before Lord Kenyon. In 1790 Horne Tooke unsuccessfully contested Westminster against Fox and presented a petition to the House of Commons complaining of the riotous conduct of the electors. The House voted the petition 'frivolous and vexatious,' and Fox brought an action against Horne Tooke to recover the costs. An account of this action, which was tried by Lord Kenyon, was published in 1792.

His examination before the Commissioners of the Income-Tax. See Stephens's *Life of John Horne Tooke* (II. 157).

The State Trials in 1794. See *ante*, p. 211 note, and Hazlitt's *Memoirs of*

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Thomas Holcroft (Vol. II. pp. 139 *et seq.*). Horne Tooke was acquitted on Nov. 22, 1794.

236. *An intercepted letter.* See Stephens's *Life of John Horne Tooke* (II. 119). The letter related, not to a social invitation, but to the preparation of a list of sinecures held by the Grenvilles. The letter closed with these words: 'Query, is it possible to get ready by Thursday?'

237. *The celebrated philosopher of Malmesbury.* Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), born at Malmesbury.

Fabellas aniles. Horace, *Satires*, II. 6, 77-8.

A hasty charge. Junius accused Horne Tooke of having deserted Wilkes in connection with the election of Sheriffs for the city in 1771. See the Letters of Junius (1805, Vol. II. pp. 104 *et seq.*).

'*Under him*,' *etc.* *Macbeth*, Act. III. Scene 1.

He comes off more shabbily, etc. Sir Leslie Stephen takes a different view and speaks of Horne Tooke as 'the most successful antagonist of his formidable enemy.'

238. Sir William Draper (1721-1787), who had commanded the expedition against Manilla, involved himself in a controversy with Junius by his defence of Lord Granby who was one of the persons attacked in Junius's first letter (21st Jan. 1769).

His work on Grammar. Part I. of Horne Tooke's 'Diversions of Purley,' appeared in 1786, another edition containing Part II. in 1798-1805.

The essence of it, etc. The *Letter to Dunning* was written and published in 1778 when Horne Tooke was undergoing a term of imprisonment in consequence of a resolution of the Constitutional Society in favour of 'our beloved American fellow-subjects.' The letter contained his reasoning on the word *That*. Coleridge (*Table-Talk*, May 7, 1830) said: 'All that is worth anything (and that is but little) in the Diversions of Purley is contained in a short pamphlet-letter which he addressed to Mr. Dunning.'

Mr. Harris's Hermes. The *Hermes, or a Philosophical Inquiry concerning Universal Grammar* of James Harris (1709-1780), father of the first Earl of Malmesbury, was published in 1751. Johnson said, 'Harris, however, is a prig, and a bad prig. I looked into his book, and thought he did not understand his own system.' (Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill, III. 245.)

239. '*Bear a charmed life*,' *etc.* *Macbeth*, Act V. Scene 8.

'*Palpable to feeling as to sight.*' Cf. 'If 'tis not gross in sense . . . 'tis probable and palpable to thinking.' *Othello*, Act I. Scene 2.

'*Familiar as his garter.*'

> 'The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,
> Familiar as his garter.'
>
> *Henry V.*, Act I. Scene 1.

Mr. Windham. Horne Tooke in the 4to edition of his *Diversions*, speaking of Bruckner's *Criticisms on the Diversions of Purley* (1790) says that the substance of that work 'was, with singular industry and a characteristical affectation, gossiped by the present precious Secretary at War, in Payne the bookseller's shop; the cannibal commencing with this modest observation, that—"I had found a mare's nest."' See the *Diversions* (ed. R. Taylor, 1860 ed.), p. 122.

Bull-baiting. Windham spoke twice in defence of bull-baiting, on April 18, 1800, and May 24, 1802. See his *Speeches*, I. 331-356.

240. '*A complex idea*,' *etc.* See Horne Tooke's *Diversions* (ed. R. Taylor, 1860), p. 19.

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240. *Mr. Lindley Murray's Grammar.* Published in 1795 at York, where Lindley Murray (1745-1826) settled on coming to England from America in 1784. De Quincey refers to Murray as 'an imbecile stranger' (*Works*, ed. Masson, x. 127), and speaks (*ib.* xi. 352) of Hazlitt's *New and Improved Grammar of the English Tongue, etc.* (see *ante*, p. 389) as an 'examination' of Lindley Murray's English Grammar.

241. *Mr. C*** . . . Mr. M***.* Probably Croker and Malthus.

Sir Walter Scott. Published originally in the *New Monthly Magazine* (1824, Vol. x. p. 297). Cf. Hazlitt's Essay on Scott, Racine, and Shakespeare in *The Plain Speaker*.

'*The present ignorant time.*' *Macbeth*, Act i. Scene 5.

'*Laudator temporis acti.*' Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 173.

242. '*Poetry of no mark*,' *etc.* 'A fellow of no mark nor likelihood.' *Henry IV.*, Part I., Act iii. Scene 2.

In the *New Monthly Magazine* there is the following editorial note on this passage: 'The writer of this paper, and not the Editor, must be considered as here presuming to be the critical arbiter of Sir Walter's poetry. A journal such as this cannot be supported without the aid of writers of a certain degree of talent, and it is not possible to modify all their opinions so as to suit everybody's taste.'

243. Note. *Agnes. Agnes, or the Triumph of Principle*, 1822.

The late Mr. John Scott. John Scott (1783-1821), editor of the *London Magazine*, died in Feb. 1821, from a wound received in a duel with Lockhart's friend Christie, arising out of a quarrel between *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *London Magazine*. The 'elaborate panegyric' of the Scotch Novels had appeared in the latter magazine early in 1820.

'*Skinned and filmed over.*' 'It will but skin and film the ulcerous place.' *Hamlet*, Act iii. Scene 4.

244. *Mr. Westall's drawings.* Richard Westall illustrated *Marmion* (1809) and *The Lord of the Isles* (1813).

A story goes, etc. A very unlikely story. Long before the publication of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), Scott had written not only the translations from the German, but a good deal of original work in *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-3).

'*A metre ballad-monger.*' *Henry IV.*, Part I., Act iii. Scene 1.

'*Fancies and good-nights.*' *Henry IV.*, Part II., Act iii. Scene 2.

'*Glances from heaven to earth*,' *etc.* *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act v. Scene 1.

245. *Like Dorothea. Don Quixote*, Part I., Book iv., Chap. xxviii.

As Lord Peter, etc. It was Martin who 'at one twitch brought off a large handful of points; and, with a second pull, stripped away ten dozen yards of fringe,' and Jack, who, 'stripping down a parcel of gold lace a little too hastily,' 'rent the main body of his coat from top to bottom.' *A Tale of a Tub*, Sect. vi.

'*Over-laboured lassitude*,' Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, ii. 120).

Mr. Constable. Archibald Constable (1774-1827) was publisher of the *Edinburgh Review*, of *Marmion*, and of *Waverley*, and the greater number of the novels.

246. '*The embryo fry*,' *etc.* Cf. 'An eyrie of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question,' etc. *Hamlet*, Act ii. Scene 2.

'*Comes like a satyr*,' *etc.*

'A satyr that comes staring from the woods,
Must not at first speak like an orator.'

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Earl of Roscommon, Translation of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, ll. 281-2. Cf. *Ars Poetica*, ll. 244 *et seq.*

246. '*A holy water sprinkle*,' *etc.* *The Faerie Queene*, Book III., Canto xii. Stanza 13.

'*More lively*,' *etc.* 'It's spritely, waking, audible, and full of vent.' *Coriolanus*, Act IV. Scene 5.

'*Their habits as they lived.*' *Hamlet*, Act III. Scene 4.

'*Give her hand to another*,' *etc.* *Old Mortality*, Chap. xxxviii.

248. '*Her head to the east.*' 'Na, na! Not that way, the feet to the east.' *Guy Mannering*, Chap. xv.

'*Thick-coming.*' 'Thick-coming fancies.' *Macbeth*, Act V. Scene 3.

Note. *Perhaps the finest scene.* *Guy Mannering*, Chap. li.

249. '*Consummation*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act III. Scene 1.

Note. *Ivanhoe*, Chap. xxiii.

250. *Flints and dungs.* Hazlitt refers to a passage at the beginning of Chap. xliii. of *Ivanhoe*.

'*Calls backing his friends.*' 'Call you that backing of your friends?' *Henry IV.*, Part I., Act II. Scene 4.

Mr. Mac-Adam. John Loudon McAdam (1756-1836), whose services in the improvement of highways had been recognised and rewarded by Parliament in 1823.

'*Sixty years since.*' 'Tis sixty years since,' the second title of *Waverley*.

Mr. Peel's Police-Bill. Peel succeeded in establishing the Metropolitan Police in 1829.

251. *Every living author . . . but himself.* Many of the mottoes were of course written by Scott himself, though that does not affect Hazlitt's argument.

'*If there were a writer*,' *etc.* This concluding paragraph did not appear in the *New Monthly Magazine*.

'*Born for the universe*,' *etc.* Goldsmith, *Retaliation*, 31-2.

'Winked and shut his apprehension up.'
Prologue to *Antonio's Revenge* (*History of Antonio and Mellida*, Part II.). By John Marston.

252. *A gang of desperadoes.* Hazlitt seems to refer to the founders of *The Quarterly Review*.

The lowest panders of a venal press. The writers in *Blackwood's Magazine*, presumably.

'*Who would not grieve*,' *etc.*

'Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?'
Pope, *Prologue to the Satires*, 213-4.

253. '*As if a man*,' *etc.* *Coriolanus*, Act V. Scene 3.

'*Cloud-capt.*' *The Tempest.* Act IV. Scene 1.

'*Golden mean.*' The English form of Horace's 'auream mediocritatem.' Odes, II. 10-5.

'*Prouder than*,' *etc.*

'and make him fall
His crest that prouder than blue Iris bends.'
Troilus and Cressida, Act I. Scene 3.

Note. Byron died at Mesolonghi on April 19, 1824.

254. '*Silly sooth*,' *etc.* *Twelfth Night*, Act II. Scene 4.

255. '*Denotes a foregone conclusion.*' *Othello*, Act III. Scene 3.

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255. '*In cell monastic.*' 'To live in a nook merely monastic.' *As You Like It*, Act III. Scene 2.

256. '*Thoughts that breathe*,' *etc.* Gray, *The Progress of Poesy*, l. 110.

257. '*Poor men's cottages*,' *etc.* *The Merchant of Venice*, Act I. Scene 2.

'*Reasons high*,' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, II. 558-9.

'*Till contemplation*,' *etc.* Dyer, *Grongar Hill*, l. 26.

'*This bank and shoal of time.*' *Macbeth*, Act I. Scene 7.

258. *Published in the Liberal.* Byron's fragment *Heaven and Earth: A Mystery*, was published in the second number of *The Liberal: Verse and Prose from the South*, the ill-fated quarterly review established by Shelley, Byron, and Leigh Hunt in Italy. Byron and Hunt found themselves unable to work together, especially after Shelley's death in July, 1822, and the review only lived through four numbers (1822-3).

'*It is his aversion.*'

> 'A drowsy frowzy poem, call'd the "Excursion,"
> Writ in a manner which is my aversion.'
>
> *Don Juan*, Canto III. Stanza 94.

'*Born in a garret*,' *etc.*

> 'The Tolbooth felt defrauded of his charms,
> If Jeffrey died, except within her arms:
> Nay last not least, on that portentous morn,
> The sixteenth story, where himself was born,
> His patrimonial garret, fell to ground.'
>
> *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.*

'*Letter to the Editor*,' *etc.* Byron's letter to William Roberts, Editor of the *British Review*, was published in No. I of *The Liberal*. See Byron's *Letters and Journals* (ed. Prothero), Vol. IV., Appendix vii.

259. Long's. 'I saw Byron for the last time in 1815, after I returned from France. He dined, or lunched, with me at Long's, in Bond Street.' Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, III. 336.

The controversy about Pope. See Byron's *Letters and Journals* (ed. Prothero), Vol. V. Appendix iii. Byron wrote two letters to John Murray 'on the Rev. W. L. Bowles's Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope,' the first of which was published in 1821, the second not till 1835. Hazlitt himself wrote a paper in the *New Scots Magazine* (Feb. 1818) 'on the question whether Pope was a poet.'

From the sublime, etc. 'Du sublime au ridicule il n'y a qu'un pas,' was a saying of Napoleon's. Paine, in *The Age of Reason*, (Part II.) had already expressed the same thought less concisely.

Scrub in the Farce. Scrub, in Farquhar's *Beaux' Stratagem*, is quoted for the variety of his occupations in the household of Squire Sullen. See Act III. Scene 3.

'*Very tolerable*,' *etc.* *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act III. Scene 3.

260. '*A chartered libertine.*' *Henry V.*, Act I. Scene I.

'*Like proud seas under him.*' *Two Noble Kinsmen*, Act II. Scene I.

It is a ludicrous circumstance, etc. Scott acknowledged the obligation in a letter to John Murray (Dec. 17, 1821), in which he says: 'I accept with feelings of great obligation, the flattering proposal of Lord Byron to prefix my name to the very grand and tremendous drama of "Cain." I may be partial to it, and you will allow I have cause; but I do not think that his Muse has ever taken so lofty a flight amid her former soarings,' etc., Lockhart, v. 150. In a letter to Rose (Dec. 18, 1821), after comparing Byron's devil with Milton's he says: 'I think, however, the work will not

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escape censure, for it is scarce possible to make the devil speak as the devil without giving offence,' and adds, 'I question whether our noble friend has brought up his friend sufficiently cleanly.' *Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, II. 127.

261. '*Furthest from them is best.*' *Paradise Lost*, I. 247.

The first Vision of Judgment. Southey's, published in 1821, and dedicated to the King.

'*None but itself*,' *etc.* From *The Double Falsehood*, produced in 1727, and written or adapted by Lewis Theobald. The line is quoted by Burke (*Regicide Peace*, ed. Payne, p. 40).

'*The tenth transmitter*,' *etc.* Richard Savage's *The Bastard*, l. 8.

Lord Byron's preposterous liberalism. Hazlitt probably refers specially to Byron's relations with Leigh Hunt and *The Liberal*. See *ante*, note to p. 258.

262. '*Nothing can cover*,' *etc.* Beaumont and Fletcher, or Fletcher and Massinger, *The False One*, Act II. Scene 1.

MR. SOUTHEY. Cf. *Political Essays*, Vol. III. pp. 48-51, 192-232.

263. '*Where he must live*,' *etc.*. *Othello*, Act IV. Scene 2.

'*Whatever is, is right.*' Pope, *Essay on Man*, IV. 394.

Old Sarum. The allusion is to Southey's early radical inscription for Old Sarum.

'*His generous ardour*,' *etc.* 'A generous friendship no cold medium knows.' Pope, Homer's *Iliad*, IX. 725.

264. '*The words of truth and soberness.*' *Acts*, xxvi. 25.

'*We relish Mr. Southey*,' *etc.* 'You may relish him more in the soldier than in the scholar.' *Othello*, Act II. Scene 1.

'*He is nothing*,' *etc.* Cf. 'For I am nothing, if not critical.' *Ibid.*

265. *Teres et rotundus.* 'Fortis, et in se ipso totus, teres atque rotundus.' Horace, *Sat.* II. 7, 86.

'*Does he not dedicate*,' *etc.* See *ante*, note to p. 261.

His own Glendoveer. *Curse of Kehama*, VI. 2.

266. '*Or if a composer*,' *etc.* Perhaps Hazlitt refers to William Sotheby (1757-1833), author of *Orestes* (1802) and *Saul* (1807), or to Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868), afterwards Dean of St. Paul's, who had published *Samor* (1818), *The Fall of Jerusalem* (1820), and *The Martyr of Antioch* (1822), and was a constant contributor to *The Quarterly Review*. 'A translator of an old Latin author' is presumably Gifford.

'*Far from the sun*,' *etc.* Gray, *The Progress of Poesy*, l. 83.

267. '*Because he is virtuous*,' *etc.* *Twelfth Night*, Act II. Scene 3.

The Book of the Church. Southey's *The Book of the Church*, published in 2 vols. 1824.

'*A little leaven*,' *etc.* *Galatians*, v. 9.

'*There hangs*,' *etc.* *Macbeth*, Act III. Scene 5.

Once a philanthropist, etc. Cf. 'Once a Jacobin, always a Jacobin.' See vol. III. pp. 110, 159.

268. '*Like the high leaves*,' *etc.* Southey's *The Holly Tree*, Stanza 5.

'*Full of wise saws*,' *etc.* *As You Like It*, Act II. Scene 7.

269. *Mandeville's description of Addison.* Cf. *The Round Table*, vol. I. p. 9.

'*And follows so*,' *etc.* *Henry V.*, Act IV. Scene 1.

270. MR. WORDSWORTH. Hazlitt had met Wordsworth at Alfoxden in 1798 (see the essay 'My First Acquaintance with Poets'), and in the Lake District in 1803, when he painted a portrait of the poet which proved unsatisfactory and was destroyed. In a letter to Hazlitt's son (May 23, 1831), Words-

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worth says that he does not recollect having met Hazlitt on more than one occasion after their meeting at the Lakes. Some of the opinions which Hazlitt attributes to Wordsworth appear to be recollections of the poet's conversation. Hazlitt reviewed *The Excursion* in *The Examiner* (see *The Round Table*, vol. i. pp. 111-125), and spoke of him in his Lecture 'On the Living Poets' (see *English Poets*, vol. v. 161-4).

270. '*Lowliness*,' *etc.* *Julius Caesar*, Act II. Scene 1.

'*No figures*,' *etc.*

'Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies,
Which busy care draws in the brains of men.'—*Ibid.*

'*Skyey influences*.' *Measure for Measure*, Act III. Scene 1.

'*Nihil humani*,' *etc.* Terence, *Heautontimorumenos*, Act I. Scene 1.

271. *The Lyrical Ballads*. *Lyrical Ballads, with a few other Poems*, published in 1798.

'*The cloud-capt towers*,' *etc.* *The Tempest*, Act IV. Scene 1.

'*The judge's robe*,' *etc.* Quoted inaccurately from *Measure for Measure*, Act II. Scene 2.

272. '*A sense of joy*,' *etc.* Wordsworth, *To my Sister*.

'*Beneath the hills*,' *etc.* *The Excursion*, Book VI.

Vain pomp and glory, *etc.* *Henry VIII.*, Act III. Scene 2.

273. '*To him*,' *etc.* *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*.

274. *Cole-Orton*. The seat of Wordsworth's friend, Sir George Howland Beaumont, to whom he dedicated the 1815 edition of his Poems. 'Some of the best pieces were composed under the shade of your own groves, upon the classic ground of Coleorton.'

'*Calm contemplation*, *etc.* 'Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.'
Laodamia, l. 72.

'*Fall blunted*,' *etc.* 'Fall blunted from each indurated heart.'
Goldsmith, *The Traveller*.

275. *Milton's wish*. Wordsworth, in that part of *The Recluse* which he published at the beginning of *The Excursion*, quotes Milton's words (*Paradise Lost*, VII. 31)

'——"fit audience let me find though few!"
So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard—
In holiest mood.'

Toujours perdrix. Attributed to the confessor of Henry IV. of France, when the King illustrated the advantage of variety by ordering every course to consist of partridge. See *Notes and Queries*, 4th Ser. IV. 336-7.

'*A man of no mark*,' *etc.* 'A fellow of no mark nor likelihood.' *Henry IV.* Part I., Act III. Scene 2.

276. '*Flushed with a purple grace*,' *etc.* *Alexander's Feast*, III. 51-2. Byron, in his 'Reply to Blackwood's Magazine' (*Letters and Journals*, ed. Prothero, IV., Appendix IX. p. 484) says of Southey and Wordsworth, 'Are they not of those who called Dryden's *Ode* "a drunken song"?'

Dares to compare himself, *etc.* Byron in the same essay refers to Wordsworth's postscripts to Lyrical Ballads, 'where the two great instances of the sublime are taken from himself and Milton.'

Wordsworth's 'Selections from Chaucer Modernised,' written in 1801, were published, *The Prioress' Tale* in 1820, *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, and *Troilus and Cressida* in 1841.

'*Action is momentary*,' *etc.* Quoted inaccurately from *The Borderers* (written 1795-6, published 1842), Act III. In a note to *The White Doe of Rylstone*,

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to which these lines were added as a kind of motto in 1837, Wordsworth writes: 'This, and the five lines that follow, were either read or recited by me, more than thirty years since, to the late Mr. Hazlitt, who quoted some expressions in them (imperfectly remembered) in a work of his published several years ago.'

277. *A great dislike to Gray.* Coleridge was induced 'by Mr. Wordsworth's conversation . . . to re-examine with impartial strictness Gray's celebrated Elegy.' (*Biographia Literaria*, Chap. II.)

'*Let observation*,' *etc.* De Quincey (*Works* ed. Masson, x. 128) attributes this criticism to the author of 'a little biographic sketch of Dr. Johnson, published immediately after his death.' Coleridge makes the same criticism. *Lectures on Shakspere and Milton*, 1811-12 (ed. Ashe, p. 72).

Drawcansir. In the Duke of Buckingham's play, *The Rehearsal* (1671).

> 'Let petty Kings the names of parties know:
> Where'er I come, I slay both friend and foe.'
>
> Act v. Scene 1.

Bewick's woodcuts. Thomas Bewick (1753-1828), the famous wood-engraver.

Waterloo's Sylvan etchings. Antoine Waterloo (1609?-1676?), a native of Lille, painter, engraver, and etcher.

'*He hates conchology*,' *etc.* Hazlitt quotes from himself. See his Lecture on the Living Poets (*English Poets*, Vol. v. pp. 163-4).

278. '*Where one for sense*,' *etc.* *Hudibras*, II. l. 29-30.

'*Take the good*,' *etc.* Plautus, *Rudens*, Act IV. Scene 7.

279. Sir James Mackintosh. Sir James Mackintosh (1765-1832), born in Inverness-shire, and educated at Aberdeen and Edinburgh Universities, with a view to the medical profession, came to London in 1788, and soon turned to politics. His *Vindiciae Gallicae*, in reply to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, appeared in 1791. Called to the bar in 1795, he soon gained a considerable practice. In 1803 he was appointed to a Judgeship in India, where he remained till 1811. Soon after his return he was elected (in 1813) for Nairn. From 1819 till his death, he sat for Knaresborough. In 1818 he was appointed to the professorship of law and general politics at Haileybury, a post which he held till 1824. He was made a privy councillor in 1827, and a Commissioner of the Board of Control in 1830. His *Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy, chiefly during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, contributed to the seventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, was republished in 1836 with a preface by Whewell. See Macaulay's Essay on Mackintosh's *History of the Revolution*.

281. *His maiden speech.* The speech referred to was delivered on Dec. 20, 1813. Colonel St. Paul said: 'A more finical opposition to any measure he had never heard in that House.' *Parl. Hist.*, XXVII. pp. 301 *et seq.* Mackintosh had spoken before on Dec. 14.

282. *Lectures on the Law of Nature and Nations.* A course of thirty-nine lectures, delivered between February and June 1799. An 'Introductory Discourse,' published in 1798, contains a recantation of the revolutionary doctrines of the *Vindiciae Gallicae*, and an attack on Godwin. The lectures do not appear to have been published, but some MS. notes, taken by Sir John Stoddart at the time, are still preserved.

'*The whiff and wind*,' *etc.* 'The whiff and wind of his fell sword.' *Hamlet*, Act II. Scene 2.

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282. '*Laid waste the borders*,' *etc.* Cf. 'Lay waste thy woods, destroy thy blissful bower.' Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, Part I. l. 158.
'*Carve them as a dish*,' *etc.* *Julius Caesar*, Act II. Scene I.

283. *Guicciardini.* Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540), author of a History of Italy from 1494 to 1532.
Thuanus. Jacques Auguste de Thou (1553-1617), whose *Historia sui Temporis* Johnson 'seriously entertained the thought of translating.'
Dr. Pangloss. In George Colman, the younger's (1762-1836), *The Heir-at-law*, produced in 1797.

284. '*Of lamentation*,' *etc.*

> 'Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
> Heard on the rueful stream.'
>
> *Paradise Lost*, II. 579-80.

285. '*Unbought grace of life*.' Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 89).
'*And gladly*,' *etc.* Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, the Prologue, l. 308.

286. *An Essay on the Principles of Human Action.* By Hazlitt, published in 1805.

287. *A History of England.* Mackintosh collected materials for a history of England from 1688 to the French Revolution, but left only a fragment posthumously published in 1834 under the title of 'A History of the Revolution in England in 1688.'
Mr. Malthus. Cf. *ante*, pp. 1-184 and Vol. III. pp. 356-385.

289. '*Like the toad*,' *etc.* *As You Like It*, Act. II. Scene 1.

290. '*The mighty stream of tendency*.' Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, Book IX.
'*The Corinthian capitals of polished society*.' Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 164).

291. '*Palmy state*.' 'In the most high and palmy state of Rome.' *Hamlet*, Act I. Scene 1.
An obscure and almost forgotten work. Cf. Hazlitt's essay 'On the Originality of Mr. Malthus's Essay' (*Political Essays*, Vol. III. pp. 361-7), where long passages are quoted from Wallace's book.

295. '*Gospel is preached to the poor*.' 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.' *Luke*, iv. 18.
'*The laws of nature*,' *etc.* Malthus, *Essay on Population*, 4to ed., 1803, Book IV., Chap. vii. p. 540.
The '*tables are not full*.' Hazlitt refers to Malthus's figure of 'nature's mighty feast.' *Ibid.* Book IV., Chap. vi. pp. 531-2.

296. '*To make it thick and slab*.' *Macbeth*, Act IV. Scene 1.
Mr. Godwin has lately attempted an answer. 'Of Population. An Enquiry concerning the Power of Increase in the Numbers of Mankind, in Answer to Mr. Malthus on that Subject,' 1820.
A curious passage of Judge Blackstone. *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Book II. Chap. xiv.

298. *Broke a lance with Mr. Ricardo.* In 1814 and 1815 Malthus published two pamphlets on the corn laws, to which Ricardo replied in an *Essay on the Influence of a low price of Corn on the Profits of Stock* (1815). Hazlitt probably refers to Malthus's *Political Economy* (1820), in which his differences with Ricardo are explained. See Sir Leslie Stephen's *The English Utilitarians*, II. 189 *et seq.*
Mandeville. The second edition (1723) of Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices Public Benefits*, contained *An Essay on Charity and Charity Schools.*

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298. *Plug Pulteney.* See *ante*, note to p. 2, note.
MR. GIFFORD. Cf. *A Letter to William Gifford*, Vol. I. pp. 365-411.
'*In the event of his death*,' *etc.* Gifford resigned the editorship of *The Quarterly Review* in 1824, and after a short interval, during which John Taylor Coleridge was editor, was succeeded by J. G. Lockhart.

299. *In his critical pages.* Gifford, though he used his editorial pen very freely, does not seem to have written so many articles in the *Quarterly* as his contemporaries imagined. 'The only entire article ever contributed to the *Review* by Gifford himself was that which he wrote, in conjunction with Barron Field, on Ford's "Dramatic works."' See Smiles, *Memoirs of John Murray*, I. 180, 200; II. 44, 49. Sometimes he appears to have inserted what Dr. Smiles calls 'the pungent wit, the Attic salt' into the articles of his contributors.

300. '*Destroy his fib*,' *etc.* Pope, *Prologue to the Satires*, 91-2.
'*I am not Stephano*,' *etc.* *The Tempest*, Act V. Scene I.

301. *If a lady goes on crutches, etc.* The allusion is to Gifford's lines on Mrs. Robinson. See *A Letter to William Gifford*, Vol. I. note to p. 378.

302. *The Feast of the Poets.* By Leigh Hunt, published in 1814. See Vol. I. p. 377.
'*A man was confined in Newgate*,' *etc.* See Vol. I. p. 378 for an account of the *Quarterly* review of Leigh Hunt's *Rimini*.
Verses to Anna. *Ibid.* p. 375.
'*A bud*,' *etc.* *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I. Scene I.
Mr. Keats's ostensible crime, etc. The famous *Quarterly Review* article on *Endymion* appeared in September 1818, and was written by Croker.

303. '*Out went the taper*,' *etc.* Stanzas XXIII. to XXVII. of *The Eve of St. Agnes*, published in 1820.

304. *Ecce iterum Crispinus.* Juvenal, *Sat.* IV. 1.

305. '*I wish I was*,' *etc.* See Vol. I. p. 375.
Note. '*He! jam satis est.*' 'Ohe jam satis est.' Horace, *Sat.*, I. 5, 12-3.
Note. '*Why rack a grub*,' *etc.*

> 'Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel,
> Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
> Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
> This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings,' etc.
> Pope, *Prologue to the Satires*, 307 *et seq.*

306. *Keats died when he was scarce twenty!* Keats died in his 26th year.

307. *Thus he informed the world, etc.* See a review of Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* in the *Quarterly Review* (Vol. XVIII., p. 458).
'*It was amusing*,' *etc.* See a review of *Political Essays* in the *Quarterly Review* (Vol. XXII. p. 162), and *A Letter to William Gifford*, Vol. I. p. 410. In the *Quarterly* review of *Table Talk* Hazlitt is described as a 'slang-whanger.'

308. *The St. Helena articles.* Two articles, in which Hudson Lowe's treatment of Buonaparte is defended, appeared in the *Quarterly Review* shortly after Buonaparte's death. See Vol. XXVIII. p. 219, and Vol. XXXIII. 177.
Lady Morgan. Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan (1783?-1859), authoress of *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) was a favourite subject for the vulgar personal abuse of the *Quarterly Review*.

309. *Peter Pindar.* John Wolcot, 'Peter Pindar,' assaulted Gifford, mistaking him for his namesake John Gifford, editor of the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*. The result was Gifford's *Epistle to Peter Pindar* (1800).
This Drawcansir. See *ante*, note to p. 277.

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309. *His attacks on Mrs. Robinson, etc.* See *A Letter to William Gifford.* (Vol. I., p. 378 note).

What he will make of Marlowe. Gifford did not publish an edition of Marlowe.

'*The fiery quality.*' *King Lear*, Act II. Scene 4.

Spiritus, etc. Petronius Arbiter (*Satirae*, 118, 3rd ed. Bücheler, p. 84), quoted by Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria*, Chap. xiv. 'Praecipitandus est liber spiritus' in the original.

In attempting to add the name, etc. See Gifford's edition of *Massinger* (2nd ed. 1813, Vol. I., p. 14).

310. *An article had appeared, etc.* John Murray had conceived the scheme of establishing a Tory review, and had obtained many promises of support before the appearance of Jeffrey's article in the *Edinburgh* (Oct. 1808, Vol. XIII., p. 215), on Cevallos and the affairs of Spain. (See Smiles, *Memoirs of John Murray*, I. 97). The first number of the *Quarterly Review* appeared in Feb. 1809.

311. '*Those who are not for them,*' *etc. St. Matthew*, XII. 30.

'*Ugly all over with hypocrisy.*' See note to Vol. I., p. 211.

Note. William Taylor (1765-1836), whose version of Bürger's *Lenore* so fired the imagination of Scott, was a regular contributor to *The Monthly Review* from 1793 to 1800, and from 1809 to 1824.

312. *Mr. Stuart Rose.* William Stewart Rose (1775-1843), the friend of Scott, and translator of Ariosto (1823-1831).

313. *The Lyrical Ballads.* Hazlitt presumably refers to some introductory remarks on a new 'sect of poets' in a review by Jeffrey of Southey's *Thalaba.* (*Edinburgh Review*, Oct. 1802, Vol. I., p. 63).

Unqualified encouragement, etc. For favourable references to Malthus see *Edinburgh Review*, Oct. 1807 (Vol. XI., p. 100), August 1810 (Vol. XVI., p. 464), and March 1817 (Vol. XXVIII., p. 1). Southey attacked Malthus in the *Quarterly Review* (Dec. 1812), but the *Essay on Population* was defended five years later (July 1817) by Sumner.

'*Reasons,*' *etc. Henry IV.*, Part I., Act II., Scene 4.

Mr. Jeffrey is the Editor of the Edinburgh Review. Sydney Smith claimed to have been editor of the first number (Oct. 1802), Jeffrey was editor from that time till 1829, when he retired on being appointed Dean of the Faculty of Advocates.

314. *Nearly a fourth part of the articles.* Lord Cockburn in his *Life of Lord Jeffrey* (1874 ed., p. 404 *et seq.*) gives a total list of 200 contributions. A selection was published in four volumes in 1844.

'*Infinite agitation of wit.*' Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, Book I., IV. 5.

316. '*Spinning the thread,*' *etc. Love's Labour's Lost*, Act V. Scene 1.

317. *But in private your follies, etc.* Hazlitt very likely put Jeffrey to this test when he was in Edinburgh in 1823 on his divorce business. See Vol. II., p. 314 and note.

319. '*Has no figures,*' *etc. Julius Caesar*, Act II. Scene 1.

'*Tread the primrose path,*' *etc. Hamlet*, Act I. Scene 3.

A Phillips. Charles Phillips (1787 ?-1859), a native of Sligo, who enjoyed a great reputation, both at the Irish bar, and at the English bar, to which he was called in 1821. Brougham himself described his speeches as 'horticultural.'

A Plunket. William Conyngham Plunket (1764-1854), the advocate of Catholic Emancipation, famous for his eloquence both at the bar and in

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Parliament, created Baron Plunket in 1827, chief-justice of the Irish common pleas (1827-30), and Lord Chancellor of Ireland (1830-1841).

319. Note. Brougham was born in Edinburgh, where he was educated. His mother was Scotch (a niece of Robertson the historian), and his father belonged to an old Westmoreland family.

The late Lord Erskine. Erskine died in November, 1823.

320. '*Domestic treason*,' *etc.*

> 'Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
> Can touch him further.'
>
> *Macbeth*, Act III. Scene 2.

321. '*As much again to govern it.*' In *Table Talk* Hazlitt quotes this line as Butler's.

'*Pour out all as plain*,' *etc.* Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, Sat. I. 51-2.

322. '*Scared at the sound*,' *etc.* Cf.

> 'And back recoiled, he knew not why,
> Even at the sound himself had made.'
>
> Collins, *The Passions*, ll. 19-20.

'*The total grist*,' *etc.* Cowper, *The Task*, Book VI., 108.

323. *There are few intellectual accomplishments, etc.* It was said of Brougham that if he had known a little law, he would have known a little of everything.

The celebrated Carnot. Lazare Nicolas Marguerite Carnot (1753-1823), the first organiser of the armies of the Revolution. He left Napoleon in 1800, but returned to him in 1814, and was Minister of the Interior during the Hundred Days. He wrote many works on mathematical subjects.

'*No day without a line*.' 'Nulla dies sine linea,' a phrase based on a saying of Apelles reported by Pliny. (*Nat. Hist.* xxxv., 36, 10).

325. *Imbibed at Wimbledon Common.* Where Horne Tooke lived.

'*Hunt half a day*,' *etc.* Wordsworth, *Hart-Leap Well*, Part II.

Lord Eldon and Mr. Wilberforce. The paper on Lord Eldon appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine* (1824, Vol. XI., p. 17).

'*All tranquillity and smiles*.' Cowper, *The Task*, Book IV., 49.

326. '*All is conscience*,' *etc.* Chaucer, *Prologue*, 150.

'*If wretches hang*,' *etc.*

> 'And wretches hang that jurymen may dine.'
>
> Pope, *Rape of the Lock*, III. 22.

An instance, etc. For John Williams's attack on the Court of Chancery, see *Parl. Hist.* (June 4, 1823, and Feb. 24, 1824), and Walpole's *History of England*, III. 281. An inaccurate report of a speech of Abercromby's on the second of John Williams's motions led the Chancellor to make some angry observations from the bench. The incident created a considerable sensation and led to a debate in Parliament. (See Twiss's *Life of Lord Eldon*, II. 490-502).

327. '*Resistless passion*,' *etc.*

> '—— for affection,
> Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood
> Of what it likes or loathes.'
>
> *Merchant of Venice*, Act IV. Scene 1.

328. '*Lack lustre eye*.' *As You Like It*, Act II. 7.

'*As they were in Rabelais*.' See *Pantagruel*, Liv. II., Chap. xxxix *et seq.*

An injunction against Wat Tyler. See Vol. III., note to p. 192.

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329. *The Year* 1794. The year of the unsuccessful prosecutions of Horne Tooke, Hardy, Thelwall, Holcroft, and others, and the year in which *Wat Tyler* was written.

'*One entire and perfect chrysolite.*' *Othello*, Act v. Scene 2.

'*Read his history,*' *etc.*

> 'And read their history in a nation's eyes.'
> Gray, *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, Stanza 16.

330. '*So small a drop,*' *etc.* *Cymbeline*, Act iv. Scene 2.

331. *Mr. Wilberforce.* William Wilberforce (1759-1833), member for Hull 1780-4, for Yorkshire 1784-1812, and for Bramber 1812-1825, was early converted to the evangelical party known as the 'Clapham Sect' or the 'Saints,' and became the parliamentary leader of the anti-slavery cause. The slave trade was abolished by the coalition government in 1807, and emancipation was carried in 1833, the year of Wilberforce's death. Apart from his efforts in this cause and on behalf of missionary work in India, he gave a general support to the Tory ministries of Pitt (his intimate friend), and of the Duke of Portland, Perceval, and Lord Liverpool. In particular he approved the coercive measures of 1795 and 1817. This partly accounts for the bitter attack not only of Hazlitt, but of Cobbett (*Political Register*, Aug. 1823).

'*What lacks he then.*' *King John*, Act iv. Scene 1.

'*Conscience will not budge.*' 'Well, my conscience says, "Launcelot, budge not." "Budge," says the fiend. "Budge not," says my conscience. "Conscience," say I, "You counsel well."' *Merchant of Venice*, Act ii. Scene 2.

'*Woe unto you,*' *etc.* *St. Luke*, vi. 26.

As old Fuller calls them. *Holy and Profane State.* *The Good Sea Captain*, Maxim 5.

332. '*Out upon such half-faced fellowship.*' *Henry IV.*, Part I., Act i. Scene 3.

333. '*By every little breath,*' *etc.* *The Faerie Queene*, Book i., Canto vii. Stanza 32.

Clarkson. Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846). The most indefatigable of the extra-parliamentary agitators against slavery. Coleridge referred to him as 'the moral steam engine, or Giant with one idea.'

334. Note. Byron in his *Detached Notes* (see *Letters and Journals*, ed. Prothero, ii. 241 note) relates this well-known story as having been told to him by Sheridan himself.

Mr. Cobbett. This essay appeared in *Table Talk* (Vol. i., 1821) and was republished in a small volume in 1835, the year of Cobbett's death. Cf. a passage on Cobbett in the *Examiner* printed in notes to the *Round Table*, Vol. i. p. 424.

Cribb. See *ante*, note to p. 223.

'*Fillips the ear,*' *etc.* *Henry IV.*, Part II., Act i. Scene 2.

'*Lays waste*' *a city orator, etc.* The reference is probably to an attack on Robert Waithman in the *Political Register*. (See *Political Works*, iv. 319 and v. 298.) Waithman was member for the City of London from 1816 till 1820, and from 1826 till his death in 1833. See *ante*, p. 282, and *post*, note to p. 366.

335. '*Damnable iteration.*' *Henry IV.*, Part I., Act i. Scene 2.

336. *Nunquam sufflaminandus erat.* 'Itaque D. Augustus optime dixit, Aterius noster sufflaminandus est.' M. Annaeus Seneca, *Controversiae*, 4, praef. § 7. The saying is quoted by Ben Jonson (*Timber*, lxiv.).

'*Weary, stale,*' *etc.* *Hamlet*, Act i. Scene 2.

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337. *Barmecide.* *Arabian Nights*, The Barber's Story of his Sixth Brother.
'*Live in his description.*' A reminiscence, perhaps of the line in Pope's *Dunciad* (I. 69), 'But liv'd in Settle's numbers one day more.'
Mr. ——. Probably Brougham. See *Political Works*, v. 145 *et seq.*
His Grammar. 'A Grammar of the English Language, in a Series of Letters' (1818).
Like Giant Despair. 'So, when he arose, he getteth him a grievous crab-tree cudgel. . . . Then he falls upon them, and beats them fearfully, in such sort, that they were not able to help themselves, or to turn them upon the floor.' *Pilgrim's Progress*, Part I.

338. *The Yanguesian carriers.* *Don Quixote*, Part I., Book III. Chap. XV.
'*He has the back-trick*,' *etc.* *Twelfth Night*, Act I. Scene 3.
'*Arrowy sleet.*'

> '—— and flying behind them shot
> Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face
> Of their pursuers.'
>
> *Paradise Regained*, III. 323-5.

An Ishmaelite indeed. Cf. 'Behold an Israelite indeed,' etc. *St. John*, i. 47. Hazlitt has in mind the description (*Genesis*, xvi. 12) of Ishmael: 'And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.'

340. *The two-penny trash.* See *Political Register*, August 1817 (*Political Works*, v. 236).
Till a Bill passed the House,' *etc.* Cobbett's *Political Register* had evaded the stamp duty until 1819, when it was rendered liable to duty by the fifth of the famous Six Acts passed in that year.
'*Ample scope*,' *etc.* 'Give ample room, and verge enough.' Gray, *The Bard*, II. 1.

341. '*He pours out*,' *etc.* Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, Sat. I. 51-2.
Antipholis of Ephesus, etc. See *The Comedy of Errors*, Act V. Scene 1.
The relics of Mr. Thomas Paine, etc. When Cobbett returned to England from America in 1819 he brought Paine's bones to Liverpool and left them there. After Cobbett's death they were seized as part of the property of Paine's son who became a bankrupt.
'*His canonized bones.*' *Hamlet*, Act I. Scene 4.

342. *The Edinburgh Review, etc.* In an article by Jeffrey, July 1807, Vol. X. 386. The reply of Cobbett referred to by Hazlitt appeared in the *Political Register*, August 1807. *Political Works*, II. 294.

343. *The Pleasures of Memory.* By Rogers, published in 1792.
The Pleasures of Hope. By Campbell, published in 1799.

344. *We should dread to point out, etc.* Scott said to Washington Irving (Lockhart, IV. 93): 'The fact is, Campbell is, in a manner, a bugbear to himself. The brightness of his early success is a detriment to all his further efforts. *He is afraid of the shadow that his own fame casts before him.*'
'*Snatches a grace*,' *etc.* Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, 155.
'*Yet sweeter*,' *etc.* *Winter's Tale*, Act. IV. Scene 4.

345. '*And by the vision*,' *etc.* Wordsworth's *Ode, Intimations of Immortality*, 73-4.
Gertrude of Wyoming. Published in 1809.
'*A loved bequest*,' *etc.* Part I. Stanzas 11-13.

346. '*Famous poet's page.*' Cf. 'A most famous Poet's witt.' Spenser, *Verses addressed by the Author of the Faerie Queene* (to the Earl of Essex).
'*Jealous leer malign.*' *Paradise Lost*, IV. 503.

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346. '*Scattered in stray-gifts*,' *etc.* Wordsworth, *Stray Pleasures*.

'*Like angel's visits*,' *etc.* *Pleasures of Hope*, Part II. l. 378. Cf. *Lectures on the English Poets* (Vol. v. p. 150), where Hazlitt adds: 'Mr. Campbell in altering the expression has spoiled it. "Few," and "far between" are the same thing.'

'*We perceive a softness*,' *etc.* Cf. Vol. v. p. 184.

347. '*Ruddy drops*,' *etc.* *Julius Caesar*, Act II. Scene 1.

Hohenlinden. Published anonymously with *Lochiel* in 1802, and included in the 4to (1803) edition of *The Pleasures of Hope*.

348. *Mr. Campbell's prose-criticisms.* Campbell's 'Lectures on Poetry Re-written' appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine* of which he was editor from 1820 to 1830. Hazlitt does not refer to his *Specimens of the British Poets, with biographical and critical notices, and an Essay on English Poetry* (7 vols. 1819).

Mr. Crabbe. The Poems of George Crabbe (1754-1832), with a Life by his son George, were published in 8 vols. 1834, and in one volume 1847. The one volume edition has recently been re-issued, as a result of the praises bestowed on Crabbe by Edward Fitzgerald, who himself made a Selection from the *Tales of the Hall*.

Audrey's question. *As You Like It.* Act III. Scene 3.

349. '*Turns diseases*,' *etc.* *Henry IV.*, Part II., Act I. Scene 2.

Mr. Crabbe's first poems, etc. Crabbe's first poems were *Inebriety* (published anonymously in 1775), *The Candidate* (1780), and *The Library* (1781). It was *The Village* (1783) that Johnson read and approved. (See Boswell's *Life*, ed. G. B. Hill, IV. 175.) Crabbe's patron was Burke, by whom he was no doubt introduced to Reynolds, and later to Johnson.

350. *He brings as a parallel instance, etc.* In the Preface to the *Tales* (1812). See *Works* (1834, IV. 144).

'*In the worst inn's worst room*,' *etc.* Pope, *Moral Essays*, III. 299.

351. *He sets out with professing, etc.* Hazlitt refers to the opening lines of *The Village*.

The sad vicissitudes of things. This phrase occurs in a poem, *Contemplation*, by the Rev. Richard Gifford, which was quoted by Johnson. See *Tour to the Hebrides* (Boswell's *Life*, ed. G. B. Hill, v. 117-8). The phrase also occurs in Sterne's *Sermons* (No. XVI.).

'*At one bound*,' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, IV. 181.

He does not weave the web, etc. An unacknowledged quotation from *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act IV. Scene 3.

The only leaf, etc. Crabbe resided for some time at Belvoir Castle as chaplain to the fourth Duke of Rutland. He dedicated *The Borough* to the fifth Duke, and *Tales of the Hall* to the Duchess.

352. '*Thus by himself*,' *etc.* *The Borough*, Letter XXII., Peter Grimes.

353. *The episode of Phoebe Dawson.* In *The Parish Register* (Part II.). The tale interested Fox on his death-bed. (See *Works*, 1834, II. 16, 180.)

The character of the Methodist parson, etc. Hazlitt probably refers to the story of Ruth (*Tales of the Hall*, Book V., *Works*, 1834, VI. 93).

Mr. T. Moore. Cf. *Political Essays* (Vol. III., pp. 311-321).

'*Or winglet*,' *etc.* Campbell, *Gertrude of Wyoming*, Part II., Stanza 12.

'*No dainty flower*,' *etc.* Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book II., Canto VI., Stanzas 12 and 13.

354. '*Wasteful and superfluous excess*.' 'Wasteful and ridiculous excess.' *King John*, Act IV. Scene 2.

355. '*And spread*,' *etc.* *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I. Scene 1.

'*Dying or ere they sicken*.' *Macbeth*, Act IV. Scene 3.

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355. '*A perpetual feast,*' *etc.* Milton, *Comus*, 478-9.
'*On the rack,*' *etc.* Cf. 'That on the torture of the mind to lie in restless ecstasy.' *Macbeth*, Act III. Scene 2.
'*Looks so fair,*' *etc.* *Othello*, Act IV. Scene 2.
'*Another morn,*' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, v. 310-1.

356. '*Now, upon Syria's,*' *etc.* *Lalla Rookh*, 'Paradise and the Peri.'
Della Cruscan sentiment. See the essay on Gifford, *ante*, p. 309.

357. '*A penitent tear.*'

> '—— the tear that, warm and meek,
> Dew'd that repentant sinner's cheek.'
> 'Paradise and the Peri.'

'*Joy, joy for ever,*' *etc.* *Ibid.*
'*May bestride the Gossamer,*' *etc.* *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II. Scene 6.
'*In vain Mokanna,*' *etc.* *Lalla Rookh*, 'The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan.'

358. '*Whose coming,*' *etc.* *Ibid.*
The '*Two-penny Post-bag.*' Published in 1812.
'*Nests of spicery.*' *Richard III.*, Act IV. Scene 4.
'*In the manner,*' *etc.* Moore, *Horace*, Ode XI. Lib. II. Freely translated by the Pr—ce R—g—t.
'*An Adonis of fifty.*' 'This Adonis in loveliness was a corpulent man of fifty.' These words occur in a paper in *The Examiner* (March 22, 1812), for which Leigh Hunt and his brother John were sent to prison.
Note 2. Moore's *Little Man and Little Soul* was dedicated to Charles Abbot (1757-1829) the Speaker, afterwards Lord Colchester. Abbot, in his address to the Regent in July 1813, referred to a Bill for the removal of Roman Catholic disabilities which had been defeated.

359. '*In choosing songs,*' *etc.* Moore, *Satirical and Humorous Poems. Extracts from the Diary of a Politician.*
The '*Fudge Family.*' See Hazlitt's *Political Essays*, Vol. III., pp. 311-321.
The '*divine Fanny Bias.*' *The* '*Fudge Family in Paris.* Letter V.
The '*mountains* à la Russe.' *Ibid.* Letter VIII.
Is Mr. Moore bound, etc. Moore had urged Byron not to become associated with Leigh Hunt in *The Liberal.* See Byron's *Letters and Journals*, ed. Prothero, VI. 22. Hazlitt himself deals with this matter at some length in an essay in the *Plain Speaker*, entitled, 'On the Jealousy and Spleen of Party.' See also *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, II., 69-73. 'The Spirit of Monarchy' was a paper contributed by Hazlitt to *The Liberal*; 'Fables for the Holy Alliance,' a skit of Moore's, published in 1823.

360. '*To be admired,*' *etc.* 'Needs only to be seen to be admired.' Cowper, *Expostulation*, 493.

361. *His Story of Rimini.* Published in 1816. A savage review appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* for May 1818.
His Epistle to Lord Byron. Included in *Foliage; or, Poems, Original and Translated* (1818).
The Feast of the Poets. Published in 1814. See Vol. I., p. 377.

362. *Some allusion was made, etc.* See *ante*, note to p. 358.
Elia, and Geoffrey Crayon. Cf. Hazlitt's essay 'On Persons one would wish to have seen' (*Literary Remains*), for another account of Lamb. In a letter to Bernard Barton (Feb. 10, 1825) Lamb says: 'The "Spirit of the Age" is by Hazlitt. The characters of Coleridge, etc., he had done better in former publications, the praise and abuse much stronger, etc., but the new ones are capitally done. Horne Tooke is a matchless portrait. My advice

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is to borrow it rather than buy it. I have it. He has laid too many colours on my likeness; but I have had so much injustice done me in my own name, that I make a rule of accepting as much over-measure to "Elia" as gentlemen think proper to bestow.' In a letter to J. Taylor (*Letters*, ed. Ainger, II., 35) he explains how he came to take the name of 'Elia.'

362. '*The pale reflex*,' *etc.* *Romeo and Juliet*, Act III. Scene 5.
'*Native to*,' *etc.* 'Though I am native here, and to the manner born.' *Hamlet* Act I. Scene 4.

363. '*Shuffle off*,' *etc.* *Ibid*, Act III. Scene 1.
'*The self-applauding bird*,' *etc.* Cowper, *Truth*, l. 58 *et seq.*
'*New-born gauds*,' *etc.* *Troilus and Cressida*, Act III. Scene 3.
'*Give to dust*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*
'*Do not in broad*,' *etc.*

> 'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
> Nor in the glistering foil
> Set off to the world, nor in the broad rumour lies,
> But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
> And perfect witness of all-judging love.'
>
> *Lycidas*, 78-82.

364. '*Fine fretwork*,' *etc.* *Essays of Elia.* The South-Sea House.

365. '*The chimes at midnight.*' 'We have heard the chimes at midnight, Master Shallow.' *Henry IV.*, Part II., Act III. Scene 2.
'*Cheese and pippins.*' Cf. *Merry Wives of Windsor.* Act I. Scene 2, and *Henry IV.*, Part II., Act V. Scene 3.
A certain writer. Hazlitt himself, who contributed three papers on Guy Faux to *The Examiner* in 1821, reprinted for the first time in the present edition. Lamb wrote a paper on the same subject in *The London Magazine* for November 1823, *Works*, ed. R. H. Shepherd, vol. I. p. 345. See Hazlitt's essay 'On Persons one would wish to have seen' (*Literary Remains*).

366. '*To have coined*,' *etc.* *Julius Caesar*, Act IV. Scene 3.
'*Civic honours.*' See *Letters of Charles Lamb*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, II. 159, where, in a letter to Mrs. Hazlitt, Lamb describes his dinner at the Mansion House.
Mr. Waithman's perusal. Robert Waithman (1764-1833), the political reformer, was Lord Mayor in 1823. See *ante*, note to p. 334.
Note. *John Woodvil* was published in 1802. The lines quoted are in Act II.

367. *Mr. Washington Irvine's acquaintance, etc.* Washington Irving (1783-1859), published in New York *The History of New York, By Diedrich Knickerbocker* (1809), and came in 1815 to Europe, where he stayed for seventeen years. His *Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent*, was published in America in 1819, and in London first in part by Miller, then by Murray in 1820; his *Bracebridge Hall* by Murray in 1822. These and his later books, *Tales of a Traveller* (1824), *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832), *Life of Oliver Goldsmith* (1849), *Life of Mahomet* (1850), *Life of Washington* (1855), and others are now included in fifteen volumes of Bohn's Standard Library. For an account of their publication and of Murray's lawsuit against Bohn, see Smiles's *Memoirs of John Murray*, Vol. II. *passim.*
In his 'mind's eye.' *Hamlet*, Act I. Scene 2.

368. *Mr. Knowles.* James Sheridan Knowles (1784-1862) whose *Virginius* was produced at Covent Garden in May 1820, had recently been a confidant of

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Hazlitt's in the matter of Sarah Walker. See Vol. II. p. 328 (*Liber Amoris*).

368. *Mr. Knowles himself, etc.* Knowles who had acted in the provinces as early as 1802, returned to the stage in 1832, when he played Master Walter in his own comedy of *The Hunchback*. He continued to act till 1843.

371. *Preface to An Abridgment, etc.* The first four volumes of Abraham Tucker's (1705-1774) *The Light of Nature Pursued* were published under the name of 'Edward Search' in 1768, the remaining three, edited by his daughter, appearing posthumously in 1778.

Clarissa. The *eight* volumes of *Clarissa Harlowe* were abridged by E. S. Dallas in 1868, the *six* volumes of *Sir Charles Grandison* by Mary Howitt in 1873.

Without suffering, etc. Apparently a kind of legal formula, as in Hall's Chronicles (Henry v. 70 b.): 'that we suffre harm or diminucion in person estate worship or goods.'

'*Not sicklied o'er,' etc. Hamlet*, Act III. Scene 1.

373. *John Buncle.* See Vol. I. pp. 51-7 (*The Round Table*).

'*His unrivalled power of illustration.*' See the Preface to Paley's *Moral Philosophy*.

377. '*Petrific mace.*' 'Death with his mace petrific.' *Paradise Lost*, x. 294.

378. Note. '*Just such shard-born beetle things.*' *Macbeth*, Act III. Scene 2.

Note. *Mr. Horne Tooke.* Cf. *ante*, 231-241.

Note. *Promontory of noses. Tristram Shandy*, Slaukenbergius's Tale.

Note. *Andrew Paraeus's.* Ambrose Paraeus's 'Solution of noses' is in *Tristram Shandy*, Book III. Chap. xviii.

Note. '*It is as absurd,' etc.* Cf. *ante*, p. 240.

381. *Soame Jenyns's argument.* See Disquisition VII. (*Works*, 1790, III. 258 *et seq.*). The argument is controverted by Jenyns.

384. Note. *There is one argument, etc.* 'At sperat adolescens diu se victurum: quod sperare idem senex non potest. Insipienter sperat. Quid enim stultius, quam incerta pro certis habere, falsa pro veris! Senex, ne quod speret quidem, habet: at est eo meliore conditione, quam adolescens, quum id, quod ille sperat, hic jam consecutus est. Ille vult diu vivere: hic diu vixit.' *De Senectute*, Cap. xix.

388. *Edward Baldwin.* The name under which Godwin wrote various works published by his wife.

393. *David Booth.* David Booth (1766-1846) published an *Introduction to an Analytical Dictionary of the English Language* in 1806. Only one volume of the Dictionary itself was published (1835).

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